HISTORY

OF THE

MENNONITE GENERAL CONFERENCE

Central BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

KANSAS CITY, KANSAS

THE HISTORY

OF THE

General Conference

OF THE

Mennonites of North America.

..BY..

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To

My Beloved Parents,

CHRISTIAN AND SUSANNA KREHBIEL,

this Volume

is affectionately inscribed.

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PREFACE.

The occasion for the production of this work was the need of it. By those who participated in this movement from the beginning, this need may not be so distinctly felt. But for those who have since united, or for the generation which has since grown up, as well as for the casual inquirer the need is real. There has for years been a steadily increasing demand for information with regard to the history of the General Conference of the Mennonites of North America. The publication in pamphlet form of the proceedings of that body did something toward satisfying this demand. Yet many questions of historical importance these minutes left untouched or unexplained. Then the work of committees and individuals, performed during the triennial periods, necessarily received practically no mention. Even of its own sessions these minutes of the Conference give but a very limited account. Only the resolutions as finally formulated are presented; of the

persons who did the work, of the discussions, the share taken by individuals, the obstacles encountered, the general surroundings, the reader gets no information. This is as it should be in the minutes of the sessions. But for this reason these minutes can not pass as the history of the General Conference, but only as a portion of it.

In allying himself directly with the Conference work, the writer was naturally led to make closer inquiry into the historical development of the Conference, but he soon found that no literature on the subject was obtainable. There was need of a book that would give minute and accurate information on the subject. Realizing this need, the determination arose to supply it. At first the undertaking seemed a small one, which could be completed in a few months, and it was thought that a little pamphlet would suffice to present the subject. It was soon discovered that the task was a greater one than supposed, and that something more than a pamphlet would be required. And now, after three years labor, the work has expanded into a handsome volume.

Not a few difficulties were encountered in the prosecution of this work. Chief among these was the securing of the necessary subject matter and reliable historical data. The realm was unexplored; there were no landmarks to serve as guides. It required a great amount of correspondence to ferret out sources of in-

formation. Often isolated facts pointed to some event or incident, or hidden cause as yet unknown, and it frequently required much study and acute exercise of the historical scent to locate the unknown fact sufficiently to lead to its discovery. Nor was it a small matter to bring all the isolated events into their proper historical relation. And even with the most careful study this first attempt can only hope to have approximated correctness.

In these efforts to get at the facts, the writer desires to acknowledge the very valuable assistance rendered by many persons, and to thank them, one and all, for their kindliness. Without this assistance it would have been impossible to attain to the present degree of completeness. Grateful mention is here fittingly made of special assistance and contributions as follows: By Christian Schowalter very much historical matter from personal memory; by A. B. Shelly much from personal memory, as also the use for several years of the almost complete series of the "Religioese Botschafter," "Chrisliche Volksblatt," and "Mennonitische Friedensbote;" from Christian Krehbiel much information from personal memory, also access to important sources of information; by S. F. Sprunger and I. A. Sommer the use of the complete series of the "Bundesbote;" by C. H. A. van der Smissen the use of the "Nachrichten aus der Heidenwelt;" from Ephraim Hunsberger all the records of the Conference

school at Wadsworth.[1] Others who have furnished valuable information are: J. B. Baer, A. S. Shelly, N. B. Grubb, J. A. Moser.

For the photographs for many of the illustrations, which in all cases have been furnished gratis, the writer desires here publically to express his thanks. Especially valuable assistance was rendered in this direction by H. R. Voth, S. K. Mosiman, J. S. Krehbiel, N. B. Grubb, N. C. Hirschy and G. A. Linscheid.

In the production of the work completeness and accuracy have been steadily aimed at. Nevertheless the writer is thoroughly conscious that the subject has not been exhausted. That no errors shall have crept in is more than the limitation of the human mind justifies in expecting. The hope of the author is that readers, knowing of additional information, or discovering inaccuracies, will in kindly spirit and from histor-

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[1] On occasion of a visit with Hunsberger the writer, in quest of information concerning the General Conference and her school in particular, was asking questions along these lines, when the aged brother suddenly said: "I have a lot of old papers concerning the school here. I've been thinking of burning them up, because they are in my way. If you want them, you can have them, then I'll be rid of them." Of course I wanted them, I was delighted. All the records ever kept of the school, with a number of valuable correspondences, thus fortuitously as well as fortunately fell into my hands—and were saved from destruction by fire.

ical interest, be free to make suggestions to the author, that he may complete and correct the work at a later date.

This little work is not submitted to the reading public with any claims to special literary merit. It is not intended as a work of art, but simply as a historical production, and to those of a critical mind it presents itself as such only.

That much attention has been given to biography is, partly, because it was felt that a closer knowledge of the lives of the leading men would enable the author to understand many points better and to enter more fully into the actual development of the Conference. Then also it is certain that increased knowledge of the men tends to stimulate interest in their work, and that so the reader, perusing these sketches, will have an increased interest in the cause for which these men have labored. That of some very prominent men no biographical sketches appear, is due to respect to their preference in this matter.

As I part from this work it is with feelings akin to regret, for I have become attached to it; during many months it has almost daily occupied my attention for many hours. It has been a source of pleasure and profit to me, and in working the subject matter through, I have, as it were, lived through the events myself as a silent spectator. The leading characters,

though I have never met some of them, have become my personal friends.

Trusting that this little volume will be received by an appreciative circle of readers, I now submit it to public perusal, and if in the Providence of God it shall be the means of kindling an increased interest in the cause it narrates, it will have fulfilled its mission.

THE AUTHOR.

Canton, Ohio, July 1, 1898.

INTRODUCTION.

BY A. B. SHELLY.

"Of the making many books there is no end." These words, written by a wise writer thousands of years ago, and which, being true then, are no less true to-day. As the world is advancing in literary, scientific and religious pursuits, works of literature, of science, of art, of religion, of history and of biography will multiply. And is this to be deplored? It is not. While new discoveries are made, new developments take place; while new and improved methods are introduced, it is but meet that these advances be recorded and brought before the public, for the benefit of those now living and those who are coming after us. This in a special sense is true in regard to ecclesiastical or church history. It is both interesting, and at the same time instructive to learn, how the kingdom of God has developed and come to be what it is to-day. By the study of church history we learn how the Lord has brought forth great things from

small beginnings. We learn how the Church of Christ has been retained and strengthened under many severe trials and conflicts, how her bitterest and vilest enemies were not able to overcome her, and how their efforts to subdue her were often the means which the Lord employed to strengthen her and to extend her influence. This teaches us to realize the divine approval of his church, and gives us courage in the conflicts, which we and the church in our days have to encounter.

Not only is it desirable that Christians should be made acquainted with church history in general, but all Christians should be familiar with the history of their own denomination – with the church of their own choice. In order to bring this knowledge of their own church within the reach of all, it is necessary that denominational church histories, as well as general church histories be written. That in this line there has hitherto been a great want in our beloved Mennonite Church, is a fact too evident to need proof. It is only within comparatively recent years that the writing of Mennonite church history in our country was begun. Most of these Mennonite histories hitherto published dwell principally on the origin and the *early* development of our church, and more incidentally only on what has taken place during late years—the times just passed. At the same time it is an evident fact, that the Mennonite Church has made more real progress,

and has thus furnished more material for denominational Church History, during the last fifty years, than during the preceding three centuries. The field covered by the following pages is, therefore, a field which has hitherto received but meager attention by Mennonite church historians, and there is thus a wide space left open for a work like this. It is true, several of the later writers of Mennonite History have touched upon the origin, the rise and the development of our General Conference, but none of them has given the subject the same amount of careful study, nor presented such an elaborate, extended and minute account of the object, the rise, the progress and general development of the General Conference, as we find in the work before us.

Through the courtesy of the author, it became our privilege to peruse the manuscript pages of the historcal part of the work, before it was given to the printer. And as it has also been our privilege to be more or less connected with the work of the General Conference almost from its beginning, having been a delegate at each of its meetings since A. D. 1866, having served on one or more of its standing committees since A. D. 1872, and having had the honor of serving as its president for a period of twenty-four years in succession, it gives us much pleasure to testify to the authenticity and correctness of the accounts as given in this work. The work itself testifies to a great amount of careful

research and indefatigable labor on the part of its author, and it can not fail to be read with interest by all who are interested in the history and the development of our Mennonite church.

In the writing of history the writer can not avoid at times giving his own personal impressions and ideas of persons and things, while noting the facts which it is his object to record. In this a writer may sometimes differ from others, who are equally conversant with the facts, but who have not received the same impressions which he has received. This should, however, not detract from the value of his work for any one. The historical part, so far as the facts therein related are correct, is what gives a work its principal value for us, and on account of which it is mainly to be prized. When the author of the work before us writes of the parts individual persons have taken in the work of the General Conference, our knowledge of the facts tells us that what he writes is true. As to the capability of the persons thus mentioned for the work in which they were engaged, the work itself gives the best testimony. When the author speaks of the general fitness of these persons, as well as of certain mistakes that have been made, he may be substantially correct. Yet others may differ with him. Their impressions and ideas of persons and things may be different. But this is immaterial. In the writing of history and the narrating of facts, the author must not

be influenced by friend or foe. He is to give the facts as they occurred, irrespective of the persons who were instrumental in bringing them about. It must on this account not be construed as boasting, when a historian speaks highly of the part which his own friends and relatives, or even he himself, have taken in the work which he is recording. His calling as a historian demands this of him, in order to give a true and faithful narrative of the events as they occurred. In this particular also, we believe the author of the present work has been faithful. In the compilation of the work he has been guided by the facts only, and, as we think, the work as it lies before us, fully proves that his only object was to give a true and authentic account of the work of the General Conference of the Mennonites of North America.

For these reasons it gives us great pleasure to recommend this new work to the reading public in general, more especially, however, to the members of our beloved Mennonite church, as a work replete with authentic historical facts worthy to be read and remembered by all. The perusal of a work like this can not fail to create a new interest for the work, in which our General Conference is engaged, and to incite to earnest prayers for its further prosperity and its ultimate success in accomplishing its principal aim, *the unification of all Mennonites*. As time advances new history will be made by our church, and as a natural consequence

other works of history will follow. The present work, however, which covers a period of almost fifty years of great advancements in our church work, will always be regarded as a pioneer in this particular sphere, and will never lose its value as long as, and wherever the Mennonite church is known as one of the Evangelical Christian church organizations of our country. That the work may find a wide circulation, and that God's blessing may accompany it, and make it a means of creating a wider and more zealous interest for the work of the Mennonite General Conference is our earnest prayer.

A. B. SHELLY.

Milford Square, Pa., June 9, 1898.

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PRELIMINARY SURVEY.

Mankind is slowly but steadily advancing toward the full reception of those doctrines of our Lord Jesus Christ which apply to practical life. But these doctrines are not everywhere received at the same time. The process is gradual. A few persons become deeply impressed with some doctrine of Christ and begin to live up to its demands. By and by others unite with them even though it is unpopular to do so. Usually the advocates of these as yet unaccepted doctrines have many bitter experiences to endure in the form of ridicule, ostracism or persecution, but by faithful persistence the doctrines, at first so repugnant, at last find general acceptance. The doctrine of liberty of conscience has had such a course to run, while the doctrines of peace and uprightness, held and advocated by the Waldenses of Italy and by their spiritual descendants, the Mennonites and Quakers, although constantly gaining in favor are still pleading for full recognition and acceptance.

At the time of the Reformation, when men's consciences were freed from the yoke of Rome and the Bible was placed in the hands of all, many by original research and study of Christ's teachings were led to accept the doctrine of non-resistance, so plainly taught by Christ. They now honestly endeavored to enthrone

the rule of love instead of returning evil for evil. However the time for the universal acceptance of this doctrine had not yet arrived. Armed selfishness, supported and justified by ambitious reformers, opposed this peace movement and cruelly persecuted its adherents. During the period of oppression which followed the Mennonites anxiously sought for some country whither they might flee and where they might serve God according to the dictates of their own consciences. By Divine Providence a place of refuge offered itself on the western continent. William Penn invited his persecuted brethren of Germany to settle in his domain and soon a considerable number fled from the land of oppression and took up their abode in the fertile woodlands of Pennsylvania.

On October 6, 1683, the first Mennonite immigrants landed in Philadelphia. The settling in and subduing of the wilderness subjected them to great hardship and privation. Nevertheless they rejoiced; for at last they had what they prized more than all else in this world—freedom of conscience. As the persecution against those who had remained behind continued many soon followed their brethren to the land of freedom. So rapidly did the number of immigrants increase that within a few years the first settlement, made at Germantown, would contain no more; so new settlements were begun. In 1724 there were already five churches which together had sixteen ministers.[1] The number of churches rapidly increased. In 1770 there were in Pennsylvania alone 42 churches, with about 1500 communicant members and 53 ministers.[2] The total number of Mennonites

[1] General Hist. of Baptist Denom. (Ed. 1848, N. Y.) by D. Benedict, p. 598 foot note. [2] Ibid.

First House built in Germantown, Pa.
Built in 1683 by Thomas Kunders, a Mennonite; the First Story being the original, the Second Story was built later.

in America in 1848 was estimated at 58,000;[1] which estimate probably was too high, nevertheless it indicates that their number had greatly increased.

The Mennonite immigrants with but few exceptions were neither educated nor rich. They came from the common people, and being driven from their country by persecution, they brought little or nothing to their new homes. Under the new surroundings they were compelled to live a rough pioneer life. Though all were busy the year round at the forbidding task of subduing the wilderness most of them were unable to gain more than necessary for existence. These privations and hardships were not at all adapted to keep up a high state of religious life. To the growing generation neither

[1] Ibid.

sufficient nor suitable educational facilities could be offered. The result was a lamentable decline among the succeeding generations in mental development and a corresponding decay in religious life. Of this degenerating effect of pioneer life a letter written in 1726 by Mennonites of Holland to the oppressed Schwenkfeldians speaks as follows: "This matter, that some of you have taken it into your heads to emigrate to Pennsylvania, has grieved us much. For, since we have some knowledge of such undertakings by experience, we are prompted by pure brotherly love to urgently advise any who contemplate such a step to abstain therefrom, as it is almost impossible even by industry to earn the daily bread. A few who had gone there have returned after having endured many hardships and dangers. They preferred to live in sorrow in the land of their fathers rather than to stay there. . . . But further all those who are of the same faith testify that great indifference prevails so far as religious matters are concerned; that indeed the brethern land together, but compelled by circumstances, they later live many miles from each other and not infrequently they never see each others faces again, thereby losing what by the grace of God they have obtained. . . . With us there is no disposition to help because we know that both materially and spiritually such action on their part would have to be regretted by them."[1] The fathers had fled to this country to secure religious liberty and to them soul life, the spirit not the letter had value. The descendants, however, gradually departed from this position and came to place increasing emphasis upon forms and externals.

[1] D. Cassel, Menno. Geschichte p. 379.

As a natural consequence this superficiality led to misunderstandings and friction. Back of the externalism there was indeed a sincere purpose scrupulously to obey the Lord. But this very purpose, coupled with illiteracy, bred differences and produced divisions. The difficulty was augmented through the distance the churches were often separated from each other. For in communities far separated differences in customs and modes of life arose. Such differences, though only external, strangely enough, came to be considered as barriers to fellowship. Occasionally it occured that some church endeavored to return to the original purity of doctrine and practice which usually, however, consisted in putting greater stress on form and custom and manifested itself by greater exclusiveness and the excomunication of all that would not conform to tradition and the often arbitrary laws. Deeper and deeper the shadows settled upon the denomination which had been transferred to this country as a light—a light which when first placed here sent forth such beneficent rays and shone so promisingly toward the future. It seemed as though a thick cloud were covering the children of peace, turning the light into darkness, converting peace into strife, love into intolerance.

To offset this tendency to divide there were, however, not wanting efforts which, in cognizance of an inner relation between all Mennonites, sought to secure an outward coherance and formal union. The desire for a closer co-operation manifested itself soon after the pioneer settlers had passed away. The date of the first effort at unification is not known. But it is known "that in 1727 a meeting was held for the purpose of

the closer unification of the churches."[1] No reports exist to show whether or not regular meetings were continued from that date. The next meeting of which we have traces occurred more than thirty years later. Cassel in his History says: "Further we find that a great meeting of ministers and bishops occured shortly after the death of Henry Funk in 1760, at Franconia."[2] After seventeen years (1777) another meeting was held in the same place. This council or conference continued after the latter date to hold semi-annual meetngs, and under the name of Franconia Conference has continued its sessions till the present time. Eby in his history, written 1841, says: "The Mennonite churches of Pennsylvania are divided into three districts, in each of which two conferences are held annually for the purpose of consulting together with regard to the affairs of the church. Minister's meeting is also held in Ohio."[3] Speaking of the Mennonites in Canada the same writer reports as follows: "Here two meetings are annually held in which ministers and deacons participate; also one general meeting is annually held, alternating between Waterloo, Clinton and Markham, at which all ministers and deacons in Canada are expected to be present."[4]

From this information concerning unification, though limited, it becomes evident that what was attempted was of local nature. The aim at no time was to establish an organization which should embrace all churches. What was sought was to secure the co-operation of neighboring churches in the exercise of church discipline within the given district. Such bodies as above

[1] D. Cassel, Mennonitische Geschichte p. 307. — [2] Ibid. — [3] Eby, Kirchen-Geschichte p. 31. — [4] Ibid.

spoken of consisted chiefly of neighboring churches and their meetings had little value as a means towards securing the unification of churches of different sections. Official connection with each other these separate district meetings had none. In fact they seem to have been very imperfectly organized, as no record whatever was kept of their deliberations.

As these organizations were local in nature their deliberations also were but of local interest. Rarely was anything brought up for consideration which concerned interests reaching out beyond their own little sphere. In character these meetings were on the one hand deliberative and advisory, without any binding authority over participating churches; on the other hand they, however, constituted a sort of court of appeal before which any difficulties arising in church might be brought for investigation and settlement. In addition to such unedifying labors these meetings busied themselves with the discussion of doctrinal points, and the formulation of laws by which traditional customs and habits might be perpetuated. An example is offered by the conference of 1727, already spoken of above. At that conference an attempt was made to secure a union of certain churches by adopting a common creed. The result was that the creed of Dortrecht was agreed upon and signed by the ministers of five churches.[1] That the deliberations at these meetings concerned only the churches represented is evident from the following statement made in Eby's history: "Conferences or minister's meetings are held for the purpose of discussing the affairs of the churches represented."[2] In character

[1] D. Cassel, Mennonitische Geschichte p. 307.

[2] Eby, Kirchen Geschichte p. 131.

these conferences were not progressive but conservative, not constructive but purifying, not tolerant but exclusive. For this reason it was impossible that through them the unification of the various and differing churches should be secured. Erroneously it was held that union must rest on an absolute likeness in doctrines and customs. This led to strict laws to secure external uniformity. But instead of being the means to bring the churches into more fraternal relation it multiplied prejudices and increased divisions. The thing striven for —absolute uniformity—can be approximated only in very small organizations. When sought to be realized among larger numbers it inevitably leads to ruinous factionalism. Had the Mennonites not entered upon this disastrous course, in all probability but few schisms would have occured and they might rank among the leading denominations of this country. For in the main tenets of faith and doctrine there is substantial unity among all Mennonites in America. Menno and his co-laborers had advocated freedom from man-made laws and forms. However in America this position was yielded, with the result that factionalism multiplied and threatened to anihilate the denomination. Man, made for freedom by God, will not always submit to arbitrary forms and laws. This proved true also of the Mennonite youth. Unwilling to bear such a yoke they in large numbers turned their backs upon the church of their parents and united with other churches. Had the succeeding generations adhered to the parental church, without any additional immigration after 1750, the Mennonites should be as numerous in this country as they now are. In fact, however, many churches have

constantly decreased in membership and some have become entirely extinct. Not without good reasons did close observers say: "the Mennonites are dying out."

Upon friends of the denomination the knowledge of these discouraging conditions must have had a very depressing effect. It had to be admitted that the Mennonite interpretation of Christ's teachings was certainly in accord with scripture. But the representatives of these doctrines – how far were they from living up to them! Peace, peace! that was the watchword; but there was no peace. Instead of fraternally co-operating, many churches, animated by intolerent prejudices, came actually to antagonize each other with great bitterness. Has the lamp of the people of peace been thrown down? Shall the dark cloud which has long been settling on this people continue to hide them in darkness until they shall have lost the ability to see? Surely after this dark night a bright morning of new life must dawn. As to their doctrines and history the Mennonites are a unique people. Not without some sufficient object has God called forth and preserved this denomination. Nor will he allow it to disappear before this object shall have been accomplished. We shall see how God had already prepared the way for revivication and deliverance from man-made laws when the prospect still seemed dreary and hopeless. The days of the Mennonite church are not yet numbered. It has still a mission to fulfill. Progress indeed is slow and many bitter trials must be endured, but ultimately those doctrines of which the Mennonites are the bearers will find universal acceptance in the world and application to practical life.

PART FIRST.

PERIOD OF INCEPTION.

CHAPTER I.

Influences which prepared the way for a unification movement.

When the middle of the present century had already been passed the prospect for a union of the Mennonites must still have seemed hopeless. The conditions described on the preceeding pages still prevailed, and matters apparently were growing worse. However for some time various influences had been at work which could not fail to have a revolutionizing effect. To these we shall now direct our attention.

Most prominent among these influences was the spread of better education. It is well known that in the early years of the history of our country education was exceedingly deficient. After the revolutionary war, and particularly after the war of 1812 more favorable conditions prevailed and the improvement of education became possible. With peace and quiet came settled

order, so necessary for the successful development of education. Material prosperity accompanied the quiet and order, so there was no lack of means for the support of schools. The advantages of improved conditions reverted also to the Mennonites, and soon their youth, instead of being as formerly barely able to read and write, obtained a better education. This expanded their realm of thought and knowledge, enlarged their vision, broke down much of bigotry, and opened the way for a literature of their own by which a quickening influence could easily be exerted.

Another important factor in the preparation for unification was a new tide of immigration of Mennonites which set in at the beginning of the present century. Those Mennonites whose ancestors had come to this country over a century ago were divided into a number of antagonistic factions which would not associate with each other. To restore these factions to friendly and fraternal relations must prove an almost hopeless task, as the courses of the disruption continued to live in the memories and would fatally intrude themselves whenever an effort was made to return to fellowship. No such difficulties prevented fellowship with the new immigrants ; and because they were newcomers, different customs, habits or views would be borne with greater tolerance. Thus it has occured that those in this country who wore "hooks and eyes" gave a kindly and fraternal reception to immigrants who wore "buttons," while they refused absolutely to fellowship with churches in this country that permitted the wearing of the offensive buttons. Under these circumstances the wearing of buttons would not seem so much an innovation as simply

a difference in custom. But learning thus to bear with some the tendency was to grow more tolerant in general.

As a result of the immigration, however, another influence developed which proved more powerful even than the one just mentioned. Reference is had to the craving for fellowship with others of like faith on the part of the immigrants. Their removal from their former home had also separated them from former church fellowship. Everything in this new home being foreign and strange they became doubly eager to be in sympathetic touch with brethren who like they had sought and found a a home under the western sky. To fellowship and make common cause in a strange land is natural as is shown by the readiness with which travelers, hailing from the same place and meeting in some foreign land, will make up with each other. Later on we shall meet with instances of this desire for fellowship.

A third factor influential in the preparation for unification was the fact that when the great west and northwest were opened for settlement some churches came to be situated at great distances from each other. This isolation created a more intense longing for some closer bond of fellowship, some formal union with those of the same faith.

If we study the situation about the middle of the present century we find that the Mennonite churches were widely scattered. Of course in Pennsylvania, in the old settlements, a large number of churches were in close proximity. But elsewhere as a rule only a few small churches were found together, while occasionally a single little church was separated from other Mennonite churches by hundreds of miles. About that time there

were churches in Pennsylvania, Virginia, New York, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, Iowa and Canada. Between the two extremities, Pennsylvania and Iowa, more than one thousand miles intervened and over the immense section of country expanding between the extremes lay here and there the few and comparatively small Mennonite churches. Had not railroads furnished a quick and easy means of communication, annihilating as it were the distances, it is doubtful if ever a union of the Mennonites of America could have been achieved.

CHAPTER II.

Events which led to the rise of the General Conference.

Having thus far considered general conditions which indirectly affected the rise of the General Conference we shall now direct our attention more particularly to those events which more or less directly had to do with the origin of that movement.

The first event of this kind which engages our attention is the origin of a Mennonite paper. Though the achievement of a union would not have been impossible without a paper, yet it would have been far more difficult, and at best would have been much slower of realization. For through the columns of a paper the indispensable exchange of opinion could easily take place, while the wide circulation would quickly bring new ideas to general notice. Most important of all, the subject of union could be constantly agitated and held before the general attention until people everywhere were ready to act in unison. For only where such likemindedness exists is it possible to secure a union which shall embrace many and widely scattered persons.

The first number of the paper referred to appeared June 9, 1852, at Milford, Bucks County, Pa., under the name of "Religiöser Botschafter." As this kind of undertaking was something new and untried among Mennonites the proprietor did not feel at all certain that his paper would secure subscribers. For this reason he sent out the first number as a sample copy. It had four

pages, mostly set in very large type, announced itself as a bi-weekly, and was to cost seventy-five cents per year. It contained a proposition from the editor, a sermon, a story, some matter of general interest and various business matters.

The editor and proprietor of this paper was John H. Oberholzer, at that time minister of the "Swamp Mennonite Church." By what motives Oberholzer was prompted to venture upon the publication of a paper appears from his salutatory article. He there sets forth that the printing press is employed as a powerful agent in the service of sin, and protests that the prudent way to battle against this evil is not to seek to destroy the press, but rather to employ it in the service of good, and thus counteract the evil, "for," says he, "God could not well have revealed any better means by which to spread good influences wider and faster than is furnished by the art of printing." Farther on the writer says that, realizing this fact, he, though poor, could remain inactive no longer and so resolved to employ the printing press and come to the assistance of his colleagues by publishing a bi-weekly religious paper. To use this paper as a means for promoting the cause of union seems not to have been a part of Oberholzer's purpose; nor is it probable that he even anticipated that it could or would prove a powerful means to that end. His aim, so far as he had it formulated in the beginning, was primarily to preserve the purity of doctrine and to develop and deepen spiritual life. At the head of his paper he had printed: "A paper for the defense of true religion," and under this the scripture passage: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Thus

modestly did the first Mennonite paper in America begin. But its purpose was good and noble. Although in the course of its history it has had many difficulties to overcome and several times has changed both form and name, it nevertheless has continued uninterruptedly until the present time and has become a source of blessing far exceeding all expectation.

The sample copy sent out met with sufficient appreciation and secured enough financial support to encourage Oberholzer to continue the publication of his paper. Of course, the number of subscribers was not large, for after a half year the whole number of subscribers was only three hundred and fifty; but after this time there was a slow and steady increase. In our day it seems almost incredible that the paper should have been able to exist with so small a support; and in fact it was possible only through the heroic self-denial of Oberholzer. For he did all the work of getting out the paper himself. He combined in his own person the whole staff of a printing establishment. He was manager, author, editor, compositor and printer. In addition to this he performed his duties as minister of several churches, besides supporting himself and family at his locksmith's trade. For about four years he thus labored alone without receiving any assistance, financial or otherwise, and when the expenses of the paper exceeded the receipts, which was usually the case, he had himself to bear the loss. Yes, he did more. He also patiently bore the unfriendly criticisms heaped upon him by antogonistic conservatives, and did not allow himself to be discouraged by opposition which this venture as an innovation had also to endure.

After some years, however, the burden of thus carrying on this work alone became too heavy for him. But considerable interest had now been awakened in others and some persons were found who were willing to assist. A stock company was organized under the name of the "Mennonite Printing Union" with headquarters at Milford Square, Pa. The title of the paper, of which Oberholzer continued to be editor, was changed to "Das Christliche Volksblatt" (The Christian People's Paper). The first number appeared July 30, 1856. Instead of confining itself as heretofore to religious topics only, attention was now also given to secular affairs of life. Advertisements formerly excluded were now received into its columns. The company erected a building of its own, raised the price of the paper to one dollar, and in general sought to establish the enterprise on a substantial business basis. This general change soon brought good results. Within a few months the circulation greatly expanded and fields formerly not reached were opened. The contents of the paper also witnessed a noticeable improvement, due to the fact that the editor, relieved from mechanical labor and business cares, could devote his time and energy to literary work. Soon also contributions began to be sent in from subscribers and very lively discussions were carried on upon a variety of subjects by correspondents from the various districts. The paper had now attained that stage of development in which it could be used as the mediumfor agitating and securing the unification or co-operation of the many unconnected Mennonite churches.

Additional details on the later history of the paper will be given at the proper place. It may, however, be

helpful to note at this point that the title of the paper was changed in 1867 to "Mennonitische Friedensbote" (Mennonite Messenger of Peace), and that in 1881 it was consolidated with the "Zur Heimat" under the title of "Christlicher Bundesbote" (Christian Messenger of Unity) and is now published at Berne, Indiana.

Canada-Ohio Movement.

The next event of importance which claims our attention is an evangelization and mission movement which arose in Canada and Ohio. During the first half of the nineteenth century a large number of Mennonites settled in Ontario, Canada, just above Lake Erie. Most of them came from Pennsylvania. They did not form a compact settlement, but scattered out into a number of smaller ones. This was to their disadvantage. For settling, as they did, in a wilderness exposed them, because of isolation and hardships, to spiritual declension. There was, however, one man who labored very earnestly to quicken spiritual life and prevent religious decay. This man was Daniel Hoch. His home was in Lincoln County, Canada, near Niagara Falls, at which place are situated the oldest Mennonite churches in Canada. It appears that he frequently and at his own expense made ministerial visits among the churches. The result of his labors was that a demand for live and systematic evangelization work was awakened. During August of 1853 meetings were held in the various churches of Canada at which the question of evangelization work was considered. The outcome was that a call was given to Daniel Hoch to become itinerary minister of these churches ; they agreeing to give him suffi-

cient financial support to enable him to devote all his time to this calling. In order to obtain the funds the co-operating churches agreed upon a system of collections among themselves. Hoch was not to confine his labors to the churches calling him, but was expected to labor with churches that stood in danger of growing cold, as also to visit neglected or isolated churches and individuals. Whether or not Hoch accepted this call could not be ascertained. However, it is probable that he did, as he developed a greatly increased activity after this time. His itinerary work must have extended even into Ohio. For in 1855 an organization was effected which styled itself the "Conference Council of the United Mennonite Community of Canada West and Ohio," in the formation of which Hoch took the leading part.

As yet, however, the idea of a union of all Mennonites of America had not appeared. Even this Canada-Ohio union was only of local nature, as there existed no conscious purpose to extend this union beyond its present limits. Nevertheless this movement, we shall find, was closely connected with the ultimate realization of the General Conference.

The Unification Idea appears.

In order that the union of a number of independent churches may be accomplished, it is necessary first of all that the idea be proposed. Thereupon must follow a general discussion of the purpose of the union as also the methods for its accomplishment. After the matter has been thoroughly agitated and the right method and means have been hit upon, then the time has come for

union. Such a process of development marks the rise of the General Conference.

The idea of a union of all Mennonites of America was first proposed in 1856 in the editorial columns of the "Christliche Volksblatt." The article in which this subject is discussed appeared without signature. But since it appeared in the editorial columns and was written in the familiar style of the editor, there can be no doubt but that J. H. Oberholzer was the author. In this article, after referring with regret to the many divisions among Mennonites and asserting that it is impossible for one person alone to bring harmony into this chaos, the writer says:[1] "Although this denomination has suffered so many schisms and is at present divided into many factions, nevertheless there is a possibility of regaining better fellowship, if not entire reunion, by pursuing the following course:

1. Let all ministers of the various branches of the denomination cultivate a fraternal confidence toward each other, and abandon all prejudice.
2. Let a general council from the several states and Canada be convened, at which council the brethren may become acquainted with each other, and may deliberate on the present condition and needs of the denomination.
3. Let this council not adjourn without electing a number of men, whose duty it shall be to meet at some later date and agree on some creed (confession of faith), which shall be based on Holy Scripture only.

[1] This quotation is a free rendering of the thought rather than a literal translation. The same is true of all quotations from Oberholzer. His writings are in very imperfect German, the sentences are often involved and frequently the thought is vague.

4. The creed thus formulated and agreed upon by the committee shall then be published and brought to general attention.
5. Finally, all those who will accept this creed and unite upon it shall be considered the real Mennonite denomination.

Here we have very clearly the proposition for unification, and undoubtedly it was the wish and purpose of the writer to bring about a union of all Mennonites. However, had the attempt been made to effect a union on the plan proposed it would not only not have gained the desired result, but it would have led to further divisions. It would have been utterly impossible to formulate a creed which in all its details would have embodied the peculiar traditions and practices of the various factions to the satisfaction of all. The weakness of the plan lay in the fact that it was based on the erroneous assumption that there existed a difference in doctrine,[1] and that, in order to make union possible, this difference must be removed. The proposition aimed at a compromise in doctrines and customs in order to attain to exact likeness, instead of a combination for the purpose of together carrying on christian work. But the idea of a union was now at hand, although the "how" and "wherefore" needed still to be discovered and formulated.

The idea met with immediate approval where most had been done in this direction, namely from the Canada-Ohio Conference. This body held its third session in May, 1857, and on that occasion passed the following resolution: "Resolved, that we hereby inform

[1] The same fundamental doctrines were then and are to-day adhered to by almost all Mennonites of America.

our brethren in Pennsylvania that with our whole heart, with deep gratitude and great hope, we accept the proposal to hold a general council of the Mennonites of America.'' But they also sought union on doctrinal agreement, for relative to the purpose of such a council they say, ''that if possible a principle for union, based on the Bible and satisfactory to all, may be found.'' Having met with this approval, the prospect seemed encouraging for union, but, as is so often the case, after proposal and enthusiastic resolution, nothing was done.

Considerable time elapsed before unification was again heard of. Doubtless the proposal had not failed to impress itself permanently and was quietly gaining a strong hold on the minds of many. But the matter needed further agitation before it could gain general attention and become a live issue. A new impetus was given to the cause by Oberholzer through an article which he published in the Volksblatt on March 10, 1858. The heading of the article was: ''The Great Question.'' ''Are the Mennonites ever to constitute an ecclesiastical body?'' The writer asserts ''that at no time since the beginning have the Mennonites been ecclesiastically united.'' He then enumerates twelve points in which the Mennonites have not unity: ''1. In doctrine in general. 2. In the form of baptism. 3. In the Lord's supper and the washing of feet. 4. In the attitude toward other christian denominations. 5. With regard to holding public office. 6. With regard to the use of the law for protection. 7. On the question of catechetical instruction and sunday school. 8. As to mission. 9. In the selection and calling of ministers and deacons. 10. With regard to an educated ministry. 11. As to the

support of ministers. 12. With regard to the spread of christian teachings by means of publication." The following is also from the same article : "If the Mennonite denomination is to hold its own as a christian church and not gradually to disappear, it is necessary that self be denied and that all the rubbish of rules and traditions as well as all the various creeds, which the contending factions have from time to time drawn up, be set aside, and that those fundamental doctrines, on which all can agree, be adopted and be made the common creed." The article closes with this striking appeal : "It is hoped that every one, that still possesses a spark of spiritual life, and is possessed of love and good will for the Mennonite denomination, will be incited by this to express himself on this vital question."

As might be expected this article did not fail to stir up renewed interest and for the first time a thorough discussion on the question of unification took place, and that in a public way through the columns of the Volksblatt. The first one that felt "incited" was Daniel Hoch. He says, that as so many propositions for union had already been made, without attaining the desired end, certainly the right plan could not yet have been hit upon. For a confession of faith he thinks that the Dortrect confession is sufficiently biblical to be adopted. That there are so many divisions he attributes to the attempt to force unbiblical rules upon the people. As a remedy for the disease of schisms he proposes that the enlightened "ministers of the church abide faithfully by the Word of the Lord and continue to teach true repentance." It is evident that Hoch did not favor a union to be accomplished through the adoption of a newly formulated

confession. But he failed to produce some other plan for union.

Christian Funk of Stouts Grove, Illinois, wrote that fraternal fellowship was very much to be desired, inasmuch as the same fundamental doctrines were held by all. The cause of the separations he finds in the strict rules concerning external things. He recommends that love be given full sway in the hearts and then the difficulty will be overcome. In so far as love is essential to prepare the hearts for christian fellowship, Funk's suggestion was right. But it does not furnish a workable plan for the union of the isolated elements.

Through the vigorous urgency of Oberholzer the Canada-Ohio Conference was once more led to notice this important question. Encouraged by what they read in the Volksblatt, they, at the fourth annual session held at Wadsworth, Ohio, in May 1858, decided to go a step further than before. It was agreed to make the following proposition to the brethren in Pennsylvania, "that they, (the Pennsylvanians) if satisfactory to them, may fix the place and time for a union council between them and us; which council is to be conducted on the principle of mutual forbearance on which the churches of Canada and Ohio are already co-operating. This principle consists in an agreement that the churches of Canada on the one hand and those of Ohio on the other shall mutually be permitted to continue their practices and customs as to baptism or whatever else it may be unmolested." This friendly approach, however, seems not to have been received with favor. For Oberholzer editorially remarks: "What the Volksblatt seeks to attain through a council of all the Mennonite ministers is not only the union of

the churches of Pennsylvania, Ohio and Canada, but a union of all the churches in America.'' What Oberholzer wanted was a movement, which in its organization principle should embrace every Mennonite church in America.[1] He had already risen to that height where all party lines vanished and the Mennonite denomination presented itself to his view as a unity.

Although the well meant overture from Canada and Ohio met with this repulse, it nevertheless helped along the course of union. The important principle of mutual forbearance and tolerance found expression therein and was seized upon not long after and successfully utilized. Then also the thought that the conference busy itself with missionary enterprise had its origin in this connection. Daniel Hoch had been elected by the Canada-Ohio Conference as traveling minister and the Mennonites of Pennsylvania were requested to lend a helping hand in this work.

To the desire for unity had now been added the purpose of doing home missionary work. The attempt to fulfill this purpose naturally leads to unity. For missionary work is the duty of all and requires the support of many and so will bring men into co-operation. The sense of the need of home missionary work was intensified by the many appeals for ministerial visits and spiritual help. In August of 1858 Oberholzer appeared with another article entitled: ''What the Mennonites in America should do.'' He urges that all ministers should rea-

[1] This conception in all its greatness lies at the foundation of the General Conference and should never be lost sight of. The General Conference is not a "branch" of the Mennonite Denomination, and as an organization must in theory always consider itself as embracing all Mennonites of America.

lize that it is the duty of every one to do all in his power to facilitate the spread of the Gospel. But that if anything worth mentioning is to be done, at least one man ought to be appointed and supported, whose business it should be to visit all the scattered members and churches and strengthen them spiritually. In order that something be done in this direction, he recommends that at the next council of the Mennonites of Pennsylvania a "messenger" be commissioned to this work.

A few weeks later an "Observer" writes: "It seems to me that our denomination ought to realize the need of having the "Upper Council" select a "peace messenger" who should travel in our own country and in foreign lands, everywhere where Mennonites are to be found. His duty should be to inquire minutely into their doctrines, faith and rules and carefully to make note thereof. He should collect the various confessions, written rules and ancient documents. But above all he should direct the attention of all to a coming general church council, to be composed of delegates from all the churches which claim to hold the Mennonite confession of faith." Surely not a small task for one man to perform was here proposed. The plan was impracticable. But though impracticable, it possessed the decided advancement over every other proposition so far made, that it outlined a course how to proceed. There was one statement in this article which must have had an encouraging effect. All along the question whether the people would back missionary endeavor with financial support had been a matter of entire uncertainty. Now the writer of this article says: "I believe if you (the ministers) would take courage and undertake this work in a thorough and sensible

manner, that hundreds of members would support you in the endeavor, in order that something substantial might at last be done."

The thought that upon the church rests the obligation to engage in missionary work, from this time on rapidly gained in favor. The truth that christian life consists not only in "doctrine," but that "action" is indispensible was gradually recognized; knowing that "faith without works is dead." In September 1858 one writer very forcibly expresses himself on this point as follows: "I am convinced that, if we are sincere followers of Christ, we cannot be indifferent in this matter. The disciples very faithfully did their work as missionaries. The world has not yet been converted; many are are still unconverted. If we know this and have partaken of the divine nature, we cannot treat the missionary cause with indifference; particularly so far as home mission is concerned. Therefore, dear brethren, let us fraternally consider this matter in the next council. The Lord has blessed us with temporal goods. We have no excuse for not supplying the necessary funds for the maintainance of at least one missionary. It is simply a matter of willingness."

In the next council (conference) of the Mennonites of Eastern Pennsylvania (October 1858) this matter was really brought up for consideration. However, it did not mature sufficiently for the actual beginning of work, but a resolution was adopted which promised ultimately to lead to it. The resolution was as follows: "Many of the ministers and members of our denomination have long ago recognized from the word of God that mission work is one of the duties of the church. But as this important

work has heretofore been entirely neglected among the Mennonites of America, while according to reports from Holland and Germany our brethren there have already begun in mission work, therefore, be it resolved, that J. H. Oberholzer address a letter of inquiry to our European brethren for the purpose of ascertaining under what methods they carry on their mission enterprise."

This letter was prepared and addressed to J. Mannhardt, editor of the "Mennonitische Blaetter." The reply to this letter was awaited with no small curiosity. However, months went by but no reply came. Oberholzer at one time makes mention of the matter in the Volksblatt, stating that the letter had been sent and "as it is the earnest desire of the American Mennonites to receive a reply, we request of J. Mannhardt, that if the above mentioned letter has not reached him that he make this known to us, either by letter or through his paper as soon as possible." Again months elapsed without bringing the anxiously expected reply. The Pennsylvanians were about to despair of ever being favored with an answer, when, to their great joy, early in the year of 1859, a letter came, written by B. C. Roosen of Hamburg. In this letter a description of the Mennonite mission of Java, which had been begun a few years before, is given. Roosen urges the American brethren to lend their support to this work, stating "that already many churches of Holland, Germany, Russia, Austria and America participate in it with their prayers and donations."

By this letter a way was pointed out how the Mennonites of America might co-operate with those of Europe in carrying on mission work among the heathen.

And the opportunity was not left unnoticed; for during a number of years considerable sums of money were annually sent to the support of the mission enterprise carried on by the "Missionary Association of the Mennonites of Amsterdam." However, the letter contained no suggestions which might be helpful in meeting the home mission demands in this country. Nor could this properly be expected, in as much as the conditions in Europe differ so greatly from those prevailing in this country.

Some time after Roosen's letter another correspondence arrived, this time from J. Mannhardt, in which much valuable information is given as to confessions, creeds, church discipline, church constitutions and the like. As this letter was afterwards published in the Volksblatt, it served to spread a better knowledge concerning the European brethren among the Mennonites of this country and assisted in cultivating a closer fraternal relation.

But though it was an advantage to become better acquainted with the brethren in Europe, nothing was gained by this correspondence, either for unification or the development of the home mission cause. There was still lacking the necessary principle on which to cooperate, and a clear statement of a common enterprise in which to engage. There was needed an organization which would lay hold firmly on the thought of a general union, seize upon a workable principle of union and set up a worthy object to be attained. These requirements were met by the movement to which we shall now direct our attention.

Iowa Unification Meeting.

Near the close of the changeable month of March, in the year 1859, there was held an unpretentious meeting in a little house in the frontier country of south eastern Iowa. From outward appearances one would not have thought that this little gathering were of more than local significance. And yet it was providentially ordained to form the beginning of a mighty movement, which to this day is constantly increasing in power and beneficent usefulness. The participants in the gathering were sturdy German Mennonites, the greater part of whom had but a few years before immigrated to this country from south Germany [1] and had settled in the fine forests and fertile prairies of Iowa. They had formed two settlements about nine miles apart, one at West Point, the other on the Franklin Prairie, in each of which a church had been organized, called respectively West Point and Zion. These two churches had met at the above stated time for deliberation. What they aimed at in their deliberations and what steps they took to attain the end desired, is set forth in the report of their meeting, which is here reproduced in a free translation.

"The United Conference of the Zion church of Franklin Township, Lee County, Iowa, and the West Point Church of West Point Township, Lee County, Iowa, was held today, March 21, 1859, in the Zion church.

"The purpose of this conference is to devise ways on the one hand for the centralization of the Mennonite

[1] Many came from the Palatinate and a large number were from the Weierhof in Bavaria.

Zion Mennonite Church at Donnellson, Iowa.

Churches, but chiefly, on the other hand, for supplying isolated Mennonite families with the gospel blessings.

"Be it therefore resolved :

1. That hereafter the above mentioned churches shall observe as heretofore the customary missionary sabbaths (the first Sunday of each month), and that on these days collections shall be taken for missionary purposes, both home and foreign, the collections being alternately for one then for the other.
2. That on the first Sunday of April of this year a collection shall be taken in both churches for the purpose of defraying the expenses of minister Jacob Krehbiel II., whom we send to Oskaloosa (Iowa) to preach the gospel to the Mennonites residing there and to administer the sacrament of the Lord's supper.

3. That Daniel Krehbiel[1] and Jacob Ellenberger of West Point, and Jacob Krehbiel I. and Jacob Krehbiel III. of Zion church are to serve as a business committee for this union; and in addition they shall correspond with other Mennonite churches and invite them to join this union; and finally they shall have these resolutions published in the Christliche Volksblatt.
4. That the next meeting of this Union shall be held on the second day of Pentecost in 1860, at West Point.
5. That the committee is authorized to purchase the necessary supplies and to draw upon the missionary treasury for defrayal of expenses.

JOHN C. KREHBIEL,[2] Chairman.
CHRISTIAN SCHOWALTER,[3] Secretary."

Inquiry into the causes which led to this meeting reveals on the one hand that the intimate relation which existed between these churches would naturally lead them to seek fellowship with each other. For nearly all the members of these churches were connected with each other by family ties. But fundamentally this particular meeting owes its origin to one person. Daniel Krehbiel was the originator and soul of this union meeting. He first suggested the idea and it was through his personal influence and efforts that the idea gained sufficient hold among the people that the meeting could be called and held. The end, which he sought, was not the meeting itself. The meeting—the union—was to be the means to this end, namely, the co-operation in support and carrying on of mission work. Krehbiel was intensely devoted to the cause of missions as well as to the deepening of

[1] See Biographical Appendix. — [2] Ibid. — [3] Ibid.

spiritual life at home. He felt that upon him, though but a lay member, rested the duty to do what he could to promote missions. He at the same time was deeply pained at the great lack of fellowship which prevailed among the Mennonite churches. Seeing that the two churches, with which he stood in connection, might be in closer fellowship and that they might do more for the spread of the Gospel, he seized upon this opportunity and persuaded them to unite, that by their combined strength they might more successfully discharge their common duty of missionary work. In this thought he had grasped the principle which could be successfully utilized for the unification of all Mennonites. It is on this principle that the General Conference has since developed and unfolded its beautiful activity. To Daniel Krehbiel, therefore, under divine guidance belongs the honor of being the originator of the General Conference movement.[1] Besides this great service which he did for the Mennonite denomination, he further proved himself a zealous worker in the Lord's cause by his efficient, faithful and self-denying labors in behalf of the General Conference in the later course of its history. To his efforts it is to a very large extent due that the Conference, when yet young and weak, was not overcome by the difficulties and trials which beset it.

As we study the above resolutions we observe that thereby a missionary society has been founded. The purpose named is centralization of the Mennonites for the prosecution of home mission. Arrangements are

[1] It appears that Jacob Krehbiel III, of Zion church, introduced the motion to invite all Mennonite churches to participate in a meeting a year hence.

made for the raising of funds for home and foreign mission. Home mission work is inaugurated. The way is opened for general participation in the enterprise. These points embody all the ground-work upon which the General Conference has since developed its activity. Every branch of work the Conference has since taken up, may readily be classified under home or foreign mission. As a general principle a union of churches should be formed only for the purpose of co-operating in christian work—missionary enterprise of some form. For such labor there is room, however, only either in the upbuilding of spiritual life within the churches or in the spread of the Gospel abroad. Because of this it is reasonable to expect that upon the fundamental principles of the General Conference the unification of all Mennonites of America will ultimately be realized. For here dogmas, customs, traditions, externals are not considered. Union is not to be achieved on the basis of likeness or unity in opinions, customs or other non-essentials. These are entirely overlooked. Extending the hand of christian fellowship, common cause is made of the discharge of the missionary duties resting upon all. The endeavor is not to make all alike, in order that union shall be possible, but union is sought in order more effectually to "Do" the Lord's bidding. Let us now follow the further developments.

CHAPTER III.

The various movements come in touch with each other.

The Iowa church union had ordered its proceedings published in the Volksblatt. Accordingly they appeared in this paper on April 20, 1859, accompanied by a letter from Jacob Krehbiel I. The conclusion of his letter indicates plainly that the society aimed at missionary work and that the union should serve as a means to that end. He says: "May the Lord so bless this small beginning that by and by the common bond of brotherhood shall unite all the Mennonite churches, that united they may care for the spiritual wants of all the isolated and scattered brethren of this faith." In the same paper also a letter from Daniel Krehbiel is published in which he emphasizes the same thought. As this letter gives us a glimpse into the inner life of the man and at the same time is worth the reading for its general contents, it is here inserted with but little abbreviation.

"West Point, Lee Co., Ia., April 4, 1859.

Dear Brother Oberholzer:—Often have I had it in mind to write you a few lines, and that particularly because nearly five years ago I had the pleasure of meeting you personally. For undoubtedly you still remember how together we walked the streets of Cleveland, and that, though not on the pinnacle of the temple, we stood on the dome of the Evangelical printing establishment and from there had such a beautiful view of the city and

the shining waters of Lake Erie. That scene still lingers vividly in my memory. For such experiences (when persons meet who have like dispositions, whose aims are the same, who have had the same experiences, even though one came from the tropics, the other from the north-pole) are in a human life what the oases are to the Arabian desert.

"In itself this should be sufficient reason why I should ere this have written you. Something new and very important which has recently occured forbids further silence. I refer to the movement which has sprung up in our two churches. The proceedings of our conference held March 21, you have, no doubt, already received for publication. In this movement a subject has been taken up which surely has been neglected altogether too long by our denomination. What is here, in a small way, beginning to develop is, we observe, being agitated on a larger scale by the "Mennonitische Blätter" of Danzig (Europe). The aim of the Christliche Volksblatt has long been in the same direction. Here and there are signs of awakening life among our brethren. It is greatly to be regretted that some, occasionally even entire churches, are not friendly toward such a movement. Such ought, however, to be treated kindly and with forbearance. The Lord will in his own time grant even to them the great privilege of participating in his glorious work. For the dawn of morning which is gradually rising in the horizon emboldens us to hope, if not for a cloudless, yet for a blessed day. Then, when the mild beams of the Divine Sun of Grace shall have illumined and warmed the hearts, will come the time when all shall with united hands labor in the good

cause. Perhaps the time is not far distant when the bond of fraternity shall extend not only from the Atlantic far into the western prairies, but even from the northern climes of Europe to this land of the setting sun. Glorious, inspiring, encouraging prospect! It cannot fail to fill every one with joy that at last, also among us, the command of Christ: "Go ye into all the world" is receiving attention; that we too as a church may now enter the ranks of those who are engaged in the spread of the Gospel."

Seven years had already elapsed since J. H. Oberholzer began to publish his paper and through it to labor unwearied for the upbuilding of his denomination. But as yet apparently very little had been gained. It is therefore not surprising that he was overjoyed when he received the correspondence from Iowa. Here at last was a movement which aimed at nothing less than the union of all Mennonites of America. Commenting on this matter he says: "The contents of the resolutions of the Iowa conference of Mennonites have come as no small surprise to me, but at the same time—since they are as spoken out of my own heart—they have given me great pleasure." He devotes a whole column to this matter. He points out that in three respects this conference hits upon the right thing. First it recognizes the need and duty of home mission. Secondly they have adopted energetic measures for the overthrow of the erroneous notion of many, who think it wrong to support ministers with money, in that they actually send and support a minister. And in the third place it is correct that through home mission a union can be attained. At another place Oberholzer says: "For this reason it seems to us and others that the invitation of our Iowa

brethren is of unusual importance. For we see that this is the only correct method for the attainment of fraternal relations and the ultimate unification."

Although the Iowa proposition was hailed with pleasure as well as the plan fully endorsed, nevertheless, this was not yet participation in the work. The future must show whether others would really unite with the movement.

Let us now retrace our steps to the Canada-Ohio conference, which we left at its fourth session. Its fifth session was held at Waterloo, Canada, May 1859. At this meeting it was agreed that, instead of holding annual meetings as heretofore, after this the meetings should occur biennially, alternately in Canada and Ohio. Accordingly it was arranged that the next session should occur in May of 1861 at Wadsworth, Ohio; a circumstance of which we shall later again take notice. In the off-year local conferences were to be held separately in Canada and Ohio. Of particular importance to us is the fact that at this meeting a resolution was adopted which favored the organization of a mission society. To this action the conference had been led by a paper on the subject of missions, which a member by the name of Detweiler had prepared and read in the meeting.

We observe that almost simultaneously with the rise of the missionary endeavor in Iowa, efforts in the same direction were made in Canada, sections which are separated by great distance, and communities which were not at all in touch with each other. The ideas of unification and of missionary enterprise are therefore not to be considered as having arisen in a certain section, but rather is it true that there was a gradual awakening

throughout the denomination, so that at different places many were ready at the same time to take hold of the work as soon as appropriate opportunity should offer itself. The particular and exceedingly important contribution which the Iowa movement furnished to the cause, was that it offered a servicable system and a worthy principle. The people were ready—the time was ripe for the inauguration of the unification movement and the undertaking of missionary work.

The proposed missionary society was soon formed by the Canada and Ohio people. In September 1859 it was fully organized under a constitution of which a part is here presented in a free translation :

Article 1. This society shall be known as the Home and Foreign Missionary Society of the Mennonites. Its object is to support the spread of the Gospel of Christ at home and among heathen people.

Article 2. Any person paying fifty cents into the treasury shall be considered a member of this society for one year. Twenty dollars paid in one or in successive payments, entitles the donor to life membership ; the sum of fifty dollars making the donor a director for life.

Article 6. Every church in care of a minister is considered a branch of this society. . . .

The society was to be managed by directors chosen from the "Life Directors;" a distinction or privilege to be granted upon the payment of a fixed sum of money.

Plainly the aim in the formation of this society was to establish a system for obtaining funds to be used in support of the mission cause. It contained no principle on which a general union could be effected. Membership could be obtained only through money contribu-

tions. The funds could be used only for direct mission work. By constitutional limitation a manifold activity could not be developed by this society ; especially not with regard to interests of the churches themselves. For to admit of that the churches as such must have a voice in the matter. Nor do the founders of this society seem to have aimed at anything besides simple support of missions. A. Z. Detweiler, the leader in this movement addressed a letter of inquiry to J. H. Oberholzer in which he asks for information concerning the Mennonite Missionary Society in Europe, as also concerning the one, he says, they had heard, had lately been organized in Iowa. Because, he proceeds to explain, it is their intention to support these missions with all the money they may be able to collect for missionary purposes. He also gives a brief sketch of the origin of their society as follows :

"Ever since this church has been organized, some of the members have been deeply interested in the cause of missions, and this has been intensified since the union with the brethren in Ohio. During the first session of that conference (1855) the cause of missions was introduced and touchingly recommended by Ephraim Hunsberger ; [1] his suggestion being that we support societies already existing. Consequently it was agreed that at all places, where regular services are held, annual collections should be taken for mission. Experience has now taught us that by this method we would never be able to accomplish much for mission." As it had been found that very little was contributed on the

[1] See Biographical Appendix.

plan first adopted, the society already spoken of was organized in the hope of gaining the end desired more successfully in this way.

In the articles of their constitution no provision had been made for a general unification, nevertheless efforts were made to win participants for this work. In his correspondence Detweiler says: "This constitution which we have prepared may become the basis for the carrying on of mission work for all the branches of Mennonites of America. . . . From the proceedings of your conference I observe that you also have the question of missionary enterprise under consideration, but that positive action has for the present been postponed. Permit me, therefore, to inquire, whether you could not co-operate with us. If I am not mistaken, your conference is in position to do much in furnishing both men and money. What then could hinder co-operation? Could you not send delegates to the next session of our mission society?"

Here we have a second movement similar to that of Iowa, which solicits others to share in the work. Will these different societies develop their activity independently or even antagonize each other? Will the Pennsylvanians continue to pursue their own plans, or will they heed the solicitations and make common cause with one or the other of the societies already started? At the three centers the same aim is pursued, must not this common interest then lead to a consolidation?

It did not escape close observers of the Mennonite churches of America, that a new condition of things had begun, which justified great expectations. Many promised themselves much of the near future. The signs of awakening life kindled joy in the hearts of the friends of

the church. At different times the Volksblatt brought articles, which gave expression to this exultant spirit. L. O. Schimmel pours forth his happiness in ryhme. J. H. Oberholzer says: "Whence comes it, that from all ends of the earth, wherever there are Mennonites, come voices which loudly call into the house of our denomination? They everywhere recognize the need of co-operation in the denomination, if ever it is to fulfill its mission as a church or to perform the duties assigned to her by the Lord. It is the Lord that doeth this."

The same feelings pervade a letter written by Daniel Krehbiel February, 1860. It contains the first invitation to attend a general conference, and in it the question of a denominational school finds mention for the first time. The following is the letter without abbreviation:

"West Point, Iowa, February 5th, 1860.

From number 92 of the Volksblatt I learn to my great pleasure that interest in mission is constantly gaining greater hold among the Mennonites. So my hearty well wishes are with the timely enterprise of the Canadian brethren. By request of the officers of this church the attention of the brethren in Canada, Pennsylvania, Illinois and other places is kindly called to the conference to be held here on the second day of Pentecost, and we sincerely hope that many other churches will send delegates to it. For not only would the missionary cause find greater support among us, but to our denomination it would be no small gain to establish a more intimate and fraternal relation between all.

"The need of establishing an institution of learning here in the United States, in which young men could

prepare for the ministry, is coming to be felt more and more distinctly. This matter deserves general attention and might be considered at such a meeting as the conference offers. For it will become necessary ere long to have efficient German schools in connection with our churches, if the churches are not gradually to become English. We recommend this matter to the thoughtful consideration of the brethren, accompanied by the modest wish that we may yet have the privilege to meet with many who read this and to discuss with them this very question; but let all things be entrusted to the guidance of the Lord. DANIEL KREHBIEL."

To the invitation given in this letter the editor of the Volksblatt calls especial attention and urges very strongly that the invitation be accepted by very many, and he closes with this question: "Brethren of Pennsylvania, New York, Ohio, Illinois and Canada—What do you say to this proposition to attend the conference at West Point, Iowa, next pentecost!" A few responses came. Ephraim Hunsberger of Ohio writes that it gives him pleasure to know that a general invitation has been extended, and in the expectation that Oberholzer will be one of the visitors, he invites him to pay Wadsworth a visit in passing. Someone from the east, signing himself "Freimuth," writes that he fully approves attendance at the proposed conference and recommends that the next session of the Pennsylvania council (conference) make arrangements for representation through delegates.

The official invitation for general attendance on the proposed conference appeared in the Volksblatt, May 2, 1860. In an accompanying letter Daniel Krehbiel writes as follows: "It would give us great satisfaction to be in-

formed at an early date, either through the Volksblatt or by letter, that many brethren contemplate attending on this conference. Everyone is welcome; but Oberholzer in particular should not fail to come. Let us hear from you very soon. God grant that we may meet in the same spirit which he at one time poured out upon his apostles, in order that a new epoch may thereby begin for our denomination."

Again the Volksblatt spoke in favor of attendance and expressed the hope that, as the purpose of the conference could certainly not be accomplished in one meeting, a second general conference be held, but nearer the center, preferably in Ohio. From this it is evident that Oberholzer did not then think of this conference as a permanent institution. As had been proposed, the matter of representation at the conference in Iowa came up in the Pennsylvania council and it was resolved that, if any ministers are disposed to attend, permission is granted by this council. Objections to attendance there do not seem to have been any. But on the other hand there was also no disposition to delegate any one to attend nor to furnish means for defraying the travelling expenses for any one who might be ready to attend. So, notwithstanding the enthusiastic approvals and the repeated urging to attend, the prospect for attendance from Pennsylvania was far from promising.

Not long before the time for convening the conference a list of the subjects which should come up for discussion was published, as follows:

"1. Organization of all Mennonite churches of the United States that wish to take part, into a missionary society.

2. The founding of an educational institution in the United States, in which young men may receive preparatory training for the ministry, as perhaps also for mission work.

3. The plans proposed in the "Mennonitische Blaetter" for the formation of a "Menno Society."

4. Tract publication as suggested in the Volksblatt."

The first two points are of great importance to every denomination ; particularly to a denomination which is doing nothing in either direction. Very properly, therefore, an active interest should have been taken in the proposed projects and every effort aiming at their realization should have been willingly and vigorously supported. That this was not the case, but that it took a number of years and much labor to establish a school and to start mission work, is evidence how nearly extinct the fire of religious life was. The condition of the denomination resembled that of one fallen asleep from long exposure to cold who can be revived only by much shaking, rubbing and warming.

Let us pause a moment here and see what the status of this unification cause was at this time. As yet there was no real union ; union was only proposed. Several movements existed, each of which aimed with more or less clearness for the same end. In Pennsylvania the Volksblatt labored for union ; and the "council" in that state drifted in this direction. The Canada-Ohio conference was trying hard to induce the Pennsylvanians to join their union, and their mission society was hoping to gain supporters from out-lying districts. And finally there was the attempt in Iowa to combine

missionary enterprise with unification, the promoters of which were zealously soliciting participation.

To us, to whom that period of time belongs to the past and who can look back and survey the whole course of the unification movement, it seems so natural that everything should have come just at it did. To those who then took active part the future lay hidden in impenetrable darkness. How must not their hopes have faded away as the date for the conference rapidly approached but not one visitor had announced his intention to be present. It was a time of anxious expectation. When only ten days remained there was still no prospect of attendance from without. Will any one come?

If we put ourselves into that time and those circumstances it will seem very improbable that a movement aiming at a general union but arising in those few out of the way little churches can succeed. For those churches had then practically no connection with other churches and were situated on the outer rim of the most western verge of civilized settlement; in a wilderness, and not easily reached. Could it be expected that any one would be willing to leave a large and old settlement of Mennonites, make a tiresome and expensive trip of more than a thousand miles into the far, wild west, there to attend a meeting which in its further development might after all remain of local significance only? Must it not have seemed very unreasonable to expect an eastern man to travel to a wilderness where only a few Mennonites were living in order to start an institution which must find utilization mostly in the east? Was it not clear that Pennsylvania was the natural place to begin a unification movement? For there were many churches situated in

close proximity. These all had a common history. Among them the same language was current. There everything was settled instead of being in turmoil and confusion as in the west. Bearing these facts in mind one cannot but marvel at the faith and courage of the Iowa people in issuing from their remote section a call for universal attendance on a unification meeting. But, that they felt very anxious about the outcome, and were not at all sure that any one would be attracted to the prospective conference is easily believed. This work had, however, not been undertaken for any temporal gain or for personal ends, but only for the advancement of the Lord's Kingdom, and was from the beginning entrusted to his guidance. Therefore the workers in the cause, though under a nervous strain, yet confidently awaited further developments, believing for a certainty that this humanly weak work would be blest of God to his own glory.

We have now come to the close of the period of preparation. It took years to develop enough life, power and courage for action that a common enterprise could be undertaken. But at last the time for this had arrived. No longer should the Mennonites be a scattered flock—like sheep without a shepherd. Henceforth they should not stand idle at the market place, but should also be permitted to work in the Lord's vineyard. In the next section we shall see how the various movements combine and thus bring to realization the long looked for Mennonite Union.

PART SECOND.

PERIOD OF ORGANIZATION.

CHAPTER IV.

Unification Begins.

In the preceding section we traced the rise of conditions favorable to the unification of the Mennonites of America. Let us now follow the further events and notice how on the ground-work already done the foundation is laid upon which has since arisen the beautiful and substantial structure of the General Conference.

The date for the convening of a general conference had been fixed. Urgent invitations to attend were issued from Iowa. The approval with which the movement had met justly entitled to the hope that many from abroad would be present. Nevertheless only a few days before the appointed time there was not the least evidence that there would be any outside participants. Of course the originators of this undertaking were certain that the two churches which had met the previous year would again be present and hold their meeting even though no others should come. That, however, would in all probability

reduce the intended general movement to local significance only. We can therefore readily believe that hopes began to wane as the appointed time approached and it became questionable whether any one would come. Humanly speaking it lacked but little and this would have been the case.

But in the providence of God it had been otherwise ordered. The cause was to succeed. The Lord desired that the denomination which had so long stood idle at the market should also engage in the work of his vineyard. The proposed conference was destined to be the means to this end. So, while the workers in Iowa were still in uncertainty as to the outcome, several from abroad were led of the Lord at the last moment to resolve to attend. One visitor, Joseph Schroeder, came from a little church near Polk City, Iowa.[1] Two visitors came from Pennsylvania. The delegation from Pennsylvania was of exceedingly great importance to the cause of union. This, on the one hand, because two widely separated districts were thereby brought in touch with each other, on the other hand, because of the importance of the persons themselves. For they were none other than the editor of the Volksblatt, J. H. Oberholzer, accompanied by Enos Loux. Heretofore Oberholzer, observing the Iowa movement from a distance, had helped it on by the influence of his paper. If after personal observation he would still be favorably impressed by it then the most potent influence of the time among Mennonites would be permanently won for the cause.

But how came it that Oberholzer finally did go to

[1] This was a small evangelical Mennonite Church, organized in 1858.

Iowa? From the council he had received no encouragement. In a half hearted way permission had been granted by that body, but no money was appropriated to meet the expenses. Oberholzer, however, was unable to make the trip unless assistance be given him, as the distance was great and traveling expensive. For a number of years Oberholzer had unselfishly devoted all his energies to the upbuilding of his denomination and consequently had accumulated no property of his own. So, though he longed to attend the conference, it seemed that because of lack of funds the trip must be abandoned. As late as May 15, he did not know that he could go. On that day he wrote the following statement: "Whether or not it shall be possible for me to attend the conference I am unable to say. Assuredly there is no lack of sincere desire to go; if it is the Lord's will that I go to Iowa then it will be so,—that God's will be done in all undertakings, that is my most sincere wish and prayer." However, the following day must already have brought a change in the situation, for he says: "There is now bright prospect that I shall go to Iowa, provided no serious obstacle intervenes."

This sudden change had been brought about through the efforts of L. O. Schimmel.[1] He had been deeply impressed with the great importance of the Iowa movement, and at the same time he realized that it was especially desirable that J. H. Oberholzer should be present at the contemplated meeting. Now when he saw that the only

[1] Levi O. Schimmel was then employed as agent for the Volksblatt. He was a minister and preached for some time in Philadelphia, and for some time he was steward in the conference school at Wadsworth, O.

obstacle was the lack of money, and that unless this be provided there would be no attendance from Pennsylvania, he hurriedly secured the needed money through private subscription. When this money was offered to Oberholzer he at first declined to accept it, claiming that it would be as well if Schimmel would make the trip. Schimmel and others, however, urged that he should go in behalf of the Mennonite cause in general. After much urging they finally prevailed. Enos Loux, a fellow minister, became Oberholzer's traveling companion.

Thus it was at last decided that Pennsylvanians should become participants in the conference. Only a few days now remained before that body should convene. Preparations for the journey must therefore be completed in haste. May 21 found them already on the way. Their first stopping place was at Wadsworth, O., where they visited and rested one day with Ephraim Hunsberger, pursuant to Hunsberger's invitation recorded on a previous page. On this occasion the cause of union was thoroughly considered and as Hunsberger was favorably disposed toward the Iowa plan, Oberholzer was authorized to invite a future session of the contemplated conference to Wadsworth, provided the present session would prove satisfactory. From Wadsworth the journey led via Chicago to Burlington, Iowa. As Oberholzer himself gives an interesting account of this portion of his journey we shall let him relate:

"On Friday evening we again boarded the train in Chicago and away it went through the night southwestward in the direction of Burlington. Saturday morning we arrived at the Mississippi river, opposite Burlington. Here ferry boats cross and recross about every five min-

utes. Having crossed over and entered the city we were about to go to the depot to take the train for the interior of Iowa—to get as near as possible to West Point which is situated about twenty miles from Burlington, when very unexpectedly we were most pleasantly surprised. For before we had arrived at the depot we were met by my friend D. Krehbiel and two other young men. And there, yes on that spot, in the middle of the street we had to submit to an examination whether perhaps we were not spies or Pennsylvanians, and behold—Pennsylvanians and no dream!

"The joy felt and expressed may more easily be imagined than described; especially as this meeting was so unexpected. Krehbiel and one of the young men, in the hope that after all some one might arrive from Pennsylvania, had come to Burlington with a team in order to convey any such visitor to West Point. At the latter place we arrived Saturday evening at five o'clock, in good health and full of joy, and were very cordially received."

The next day was Pentecost. In observance of this occasion as also for a preparation for the unification deliberations which were to begin on the day following the Lord's Supper was celebrated. The visitors from abroad also took part in this. To be assembled about the Lord's table under these peculiar ciscumstances could not fail to bring the hearts of these sincere christians into closer fellowship; being consciously reminded that all have but one and the same Lord. With this thought in mind fraternal considerateness would be more readily observed. It was exceedingly appropriate that these people should be in such a solemn frame of mind. For the work which

they were about to perform involved great responsibility and was of immeasurable importance to the Mennonites of America.

The first General Conference was held at West Point, Lee County, Iowa, on May 28—29, 1860. The greater part of the first day was devoted to religious services. The people had turned out in large numbers. Very many outsiders in addition to almost all the members of the two churches were present, and they filled the good sized church[1] to overflowing. They were attracted by the unusualness of the occasion. The plan to effect a union of all Mennonites was something entirely new, and of itself created enough interest to attract many. But now that visitors from abroad had come, and among these Pennsylvanians—representatives of those churches which had been in this country for more than a century, who had their own peculiar language and were exceedingly strict and exclusive—when this became known the interest grew into excitement and everybody flocked to the meeting in greatest expectancy. In order to gratify the demand thus expressed three sermons were delivered in the forenoon and two in the afternoon, the visiting ministers, of course, being given particular prominence, and undoubtedly in all those speeches fraternity and unity formed the chief topic. Judging from later references to this meeting, there was a deep moving of the Spirit felt at the time. The Lord was nigh.

The conference proper opened after the conclusion of the afternoon service. Just how the beginning was made is not on record. Very likely J. C. Krehbiel,

[1] It was the church of another denomination. The West Point people had no church of their own at that time.

chairman of the previous meeting, set forth the cause and purpose of the meeting, whereupon an organization was effected which consisted in electing a chairman and a secretary. J. H. Oberholzer was nominated for chairman and Christian Schowalter for secretary and both were unanimously elected by acclamation. As the day was already rapidly drawing to its close arrangements were made by which the main question, the cause of union, could be brought under successful deliberation on the following day by "electing a committee of five who should prepare a plan for the union of the Mennonite churches of America, and submit the same on the following morning." Into this committee were chosen J. H. Oberholzer, Joseph Schroeder, Jacob Krehbiel I, David Ruth, and Jacob Krehbiel II.

With this the business session of the first day was concluded. But the labor in behalf of union was not ended for this day. For there was yet to occur the most important work which had ever been performed in behalf of the Mennonites of America. The foundation was to be laid on which to build a general union. So not only did the success of this conference session depend on the work of this committee, but upon it hinged the success or failure of the whole movement. For it is plain that no strong objections would be made to the principles and regulations which this committee would propose, but that they would be adopted practically as outlined by them. It was therefore now in the hands of these five men to select those principles which should to an indefinite future shape the character and guide the destiny of the Mennonite union. They were not men of great learning to whom this momentous task had been

entrusted ; on the contrary their education was very limited. Although ministers they supported themselves by their own labor, four by farming, one by printing. They were thoughtful, modest men, gifted with good common sense, of deep piety and actuated by pure motives. In their efforts for union selfish motives had no place. They were actuated by the sincere purpose to do God's will, to assist in the upbuilding of his kingdom by securing if possible fraternal fellowship and unity among the scattered Mennonites. This being true they did not enter upon their task without fervent prayer and supplication. And the Lord heard their prayer and so blessed their work that they were enabled to draw up a plan and adopt principles upon which the conference has since developed with most gratifying success.

On the following morning the committee submitted its report in writing. Each of the proposed points was subjected to a thorough consideration. According to the minutes of the conference few, perhaps no alterations or additions were made to the report as submitted. The brief reference made to it is as follows : "In today's meeting the committee submitted its report in writing. After thorough deliberation it was adopted as follows."

As the resolutions adopted are of great importance they are below inserted in full, the translation being as faithful as possible to the thought.

"*Union of all Mennonites of North America.*

"It is a matter of gratification to every friend and supporter of Mennonite doctrines to know that within the United States and Canada there are about 128,000

Mennonites. But at the same time it is humiliating to know that this denomination has never, since its existence in America, constituted an ecclesiastical organization; that is, has failed entirely to co-operate as a general church. But most deplorable of all, seems to us, is the fact that, just because of the lack of fraternity among those who still cling to the Mennonite doctrines, there is in many places a constant increase of factionalism and a corresponding decline in spiritual life. Because they recognized this state of affairs many ministers and members have for many years earnestly desired that an intimate and fraternal co-operation might be gained.

"Accordingly a number of ministers and members in the western states issued a call for a general conference, to meet at West Point, Lee County, Iowa on May 28, 1860, for the purpose of considering ways and means for the unification of all Mennonites of North America, conformable to 1 Cor. 12 : 12—27.

"After this great and important matter had, under devout prayer and supplication, been deliberated upon, the following resolutions were adopted :

1. That all branches of the Mennonite denomination in North America, regardless of minor differences, should extend to each other the hand of fellowship.
2. That fraternal relations shall be severed only when a person or church abandons the fundamental doctrines of the denomination; namely those concerning baptism, the oath etc., (wherein we follow Menno Simon), as indeed also all those principal doctrines of the faith which we with Menno base solely upon the Gospel as received from our Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles.

3. That no brother shall be found guilty of heresy unless his error can be established on unequivocal Scripture evidence.

4. That the General Conference shall consider no excommunication as scripturally valid, unless a real transgression or neglect, conflicting with the demands of scripture, exists.

5. That every church or district shall be entitled to continue, without molestation or hindrance and amenable only to their own conscience, any rules or regulations they may have adopted for their own government; provided they do not conflict with the tenets of our general confession.

6. That if a member of a church, because of existing customs or ordinances in his church, shall desire to sever his connection and unite with some other church of the General Conference, such action shall not be interfered with."

These six points constitute the entire set of resolutions, adopted at this time, looking to the formation of a union. By the first article the greatest obstacle to union is removed. For it is just on minor differences —on non-essentials—that some of the most calamitous schisms have occurred. Had non-essentials been given any place in the program for union surely this cause would also have been wrecked on that perilous rock. But the danger was known and the framers of the plan wisely steered clear of it. The strength of the Conference was not to be wasted in disputes over non-essentials. To this position the Conference has since steadfastly adhered to her great gain. "In essentials unity, in

non-essentials liberty'' has become the current expression of this principle.

The second article seizes upon the central feature of the Mennonite faith, in that it rests all doctrinal points of faith on Scripture only and rejects all tradition, and that it asserts that on essential points Menno Simon's interpretation of Scripture is correct.

Articles three and four are concerned with church discipline and show what position the General Conference assigns to the Word of God, pointing out the limits of authority for those who exercise discipline. God's Word and conscience are in all things to be the final arbiters. Freedom from purely human ordinances is vouchsafed. Arbitrariness in church discipline is ruled out.

The relation of the individual church to the Conference as provided for by article five, is fortunate and appropriate. The Conference is not set up as a superior authority which may dictate to the churches. Each church retains its independent self-government. This is the relation in which churches stood toward each other in apostolic times. Every church governed itself while at the same time it co-operated with the others in carrying on missionary enterprises. This democratic form of church government is in full harmony with the spirit of our denomination as well as that of our free country.

By article six the Conference aims to take such a position that existing differences in customs and ordinances shall be no obstacle to fraternal cognizance and fellowship between individual churches; guaranteeing at the same time full liberty of conscience to individuals.

The plan of union therefore embodies the following points: 1. The principle for union. 2. The essence of

the confession of faith. 3. The position on church discipline. 4. The form of church government. 5. The establishment of freedom of conscience for the individual, and fraternal relation between the churches. So nearly do these points cover the necessary ground for union that, excepting a few verbal changes made later, almost no additions have since been made.

After having agreed upon the plan for union the conference directed its attention to the object for which as an organization it should exist. This object is expressed in the one word—Mission. Under this general head come all the activities the Conference has ever entered upon; which, however, in practice divides itself into various phases of work. Four of the principal lines of work undertaken later are already named at this conference (namely Foreign Mission, Home Mission, Publication, and Education) as will be seen from the following report:

"The cause of Missions was also considered and the following resolutions were adopted:

1. That hereafter Home and Foreign Mission shall be carried on according to ability by our denomination. There shall be one treasury at Franklin Centre, Lee Co., Iowa, and another at Milford Square, Pa., the latter to be in charge of the treasurer of the Mennonite Printing Union. Into these treasuries all money intended for missionary purpose or for the distribution of tracts shall be paid, and the fund thus contributed shall be considered the common property of the denomination. This arrangement shall continue until changed by some future session of the Conference.

2. Every church is requested to collect money in the manner as to it seems right and best and then to remit the money to one of the treasurers, designating to what cause the money is to be devoted.
3. That the Publishing House already in existence in our denomination is appreciated as a helpful institution and that it is hereby fraternally recommended to general support.
4. That an institution for theological training shall be established as soon as it can be accomplished through the support of the denomination."

By whom Home and Foreign Mission were proposed as departments of activity is not known. There was no need that any one in particular should champion their interests for all present were already in full sympathy with efforts along those lines. The cause of Publication naturally found its advocate in J. H. Oberholzer. For the cause of Education Daniel Krehbiel had raised the banner, and it was through him that this vital interest found a place on the program.

Although the Conference through its resolutions set forth what particular lines of work it was intended to engage in, nevertheless nothing was done at this session looking to the realization of any of them. The money to be collected by the system proposed was not to be used on any project of their own but was to be remitted to other organizations. The cause of publication was only approved of and recommended, but no responsibility taken with regard to it. In order to continue in existence it was necessary for the Conference to engage in some enterprise. For without anything to do or accomplish no organization can long exist—flourish never. The

Conference was in need of at least one undertaking for the existence and success of which she was responsible; some enterprise which depended for support on the churches and the individual members, upon which the interests of the members could be centered; a cause through which a sense of ecclesiastical self-consciousness could be awakened; a work of which the many could say "it is ours." This work needed to be such as would easily win the hearts and gain support. It should require repeated deliberations in conference, give to a standing committee plenty to do and year after year center upon itself the attention of the churches and enlist their loyal support. No enterprise could meet all these conditions better than a school. A better religious as well as literary education was felt as a great need. To a school supplying this need parents would the more readily contribute because of the benefit their children would reap. In addition to other advantages school is an excellent means to remove sectional differences and peculiarities and to break down the artificial boundaries with which prejudice has always hedged itself in. As the establishment and operation of a school by a denomination requires an organization it is evident that the cause of union would have a promising beginning if the first common work undertaken would be a school. That this particular line of work was actually proposed as the first undertaking did not arise from the contemplation of such reasons as above enumerated. It is doubtful whether anybody thought of them. The determination to provide for christian education had its motive in the fact that those men believed that thereby a great blessing would arise to their denomination and because they

hoped that on the one hand the denomination would then secure a better educated ministry and on the other hand that through the school some young men would be led to become missionaries, which would enable the denomination to carry on mission work of their own.

Although a plan for union had now been completed and the lines of work agreed upon, no actual union was effected. Nothing of what had been done was to be considered binding on anyone. The resolutions were to be submitted to the churches for consideration, after which they should be reconsidered at the next conference and only then should they be signed and become binding. This deliberate proceedure, it must be admitted, was very prudent. For after prolonged deliberation objectionable points are sometimes discovered which at first had escaped detection and which it might be very desirable to have removed. Then again it guarded against any appearance of undue haste. And finally the proposed plan could be subjected to close scrutiny by such as contemplated uniting but had not before taken part, and if any change seemed desirable it could be more easily made than if the instrument was already binding on some.

Its next session this conference decided to hold at Wadsworth, Ohio, on the second day of Pentecost 1861; the same place and almost the same time appointed for the next meeting of the Canada-Ohio Conference. Are these two movements to come in touch with each other at that time?

As to the spirit in which the deliberations of the conference were conducted, as to what feelings possessed those present, what hopes were entertained can be seen from what was retrospectively written of that occasion:

We quote first from Oberholzer. He says: "When I look back to the Mennonite Conference held at West Point, which it was my privilege to attend, I experience a genuine joy in my heart. Everything that I saw and heard justifies one in saying: 'The whole assemblage was one heart and one soul.' A more important meeting of ministers and members has in my opinion never been held among Mennonites in America; that because this conference aims at a union of all Mennonites in the United States and Canada." In another place the same writer says: "It is befitting the times that at last men have arisen within our denomination who are willing to undertake the task of raising this denomination to that condition and position which is worthy of the denomination itself and suitable to the age in which we live."

Another writer, signing his article with "K," says: "It is but a few days ago that we were permitted the enjoyment of fraternal and cordial association, and already we are separated again by a distance of more than a thousand miles. The occasion, of which so much had been said and written has come and gone, but a grand work, to which that meeting is to form the foundation, has been inaugurated. It is the Lord's work and if we are found to be usable tools in the Master's hand the work will prosper. The beginning has satisfied even the most sanguine expectation. We may confidently believe that the spirit of God was with us and that we had essentially a pentecost. It was an occasion never to be forgotten."

In a letter J. C. Krehbiel says: "I must confess that the pentecostal days which our heavenly Father permitted us to enjoy will remain as an especially bright

place in my memory of the past. For seemingly we were taken by the unifying spirit of God and together lifted to Tabor's height. Who would censure us for being filled with the wish to stay the flow of time, saying with the disciples: 'Lord it is good for us to be here.'

In the conference proceedings this meeting is recorded as the First General Conference and all later meetings are consecutively numbered from this one. To avoid confusion this order shall here be observed in references made to conferences. But in reality that was a preliminary meeting aiming at the formation of a General Conference and not that organization itself, unless, indeed, the first meeting held pursuant to a call for unification is conceived as constituting the Conference. If, however, the Conference is thought of as an organization it must have had its beginning at some later session. For at this meeting no churches were represented by delegates, the plan of union was not considered as completed, and no one signed the resolutions. There was as yet no union. What had so far been done was purely preliminary for the attainment of a union. Even at the next meeting the organization was not completed. For though the resolutions agreed upon at that time were signed by a number of ministers and lay-members, they were not yet ratified by the churches, and so were binding only upon the individual signers. The union was not properly completed until the churches had become participants through duly authorized delegates. This occurred for the first time in 1866, membership being that year secured only through written credentials from the respective churches.

That the process of union and organization experi-

enced a rather slow development need not surprise us. For almost without exception the participants were entirely inexperienced in organized co-operation of any sort. It was necessary to a great extent to let things take their own course and to adjust matters according as changing circumstances and new needs seemed to demand, and thus gradually learning from experience, to perfect the originally rather primitive organization. Having begun weak and small, it was the lot of the conference to develop as a child, gradually coming to know its powers and learning, sometimes by mistakes, how to use them. But this slow development was really to the advantage of the movement. For into it were to be drawn people of various views, customs, language etc., and brought into fraternal relation. By keeping the original cast in a plastic state it was possible more easily to adjust for the reception of the different elements than would have been the case had all been complete and unalterable.

The results achieved by the First Conference were a great gain for the cause of union. Never before had a workable scheme been devised in this country by which all Mennonites could be united. What made the result still more significant was the fact that it had been brought about through the co-operation of representatives from sections which were distant from each other, which differred greatly in external matters and had heretofore not been in touch with each other. The participants were from two main sections. 1. Three churches in Iowa, namely : a. Zion ; b. West Point ; c. Polk City. These were alike in that they were situated in the west and had recently immigrated from Germany. 2. Pennsylvania churches, Oberholzer and Loux being the repre-

sentatives. It must not be understood that these men stood in intimate relation with all the Mennonite churches of Pennsylvania. Only with a comparitively small number did Oberholzer stand in such a relation that it could be expected that his influence would lead them to unite with the movement. As we shall hereafter have to deal with the churches, which adhered to Oberholzer, as a part of the General Conference an account of them may properly be given space here.

Churches of Pennsylvania which united with the General Conference.

In order to trace out the history of these churches we must once more return to the past. The Franconia Conference, to which reference is made in the introduction, had since the middle of the eighteenth century continued its semi-annual meetings. No progress had been made either in aims or methods. On the contrary retrogression have taken place. Such a burden of human ordinances had now accumulated that spiritual life could no longer prosper in those who attempted to bear this burden. Of this conference Oberholzer had at first also been a member. Soon after he was called to the ministry he recognized many of the weaknesses and defects of that body. He was most impressed at first by the lack of system and organization and decided to make an effort to improve conditions along this line. With this end in view he drafted a constitution and in 1847 submitted it to the Franconia Conference for consideration. Some approved of the plan but the majority did not. It appears that opposition against Oberholzer now arose

and that the conference undertook to discipline him for attempting to introduce an innovation, the demand being that he recant and confess his error. As he, however, did not believe himself guilty of any disciplinable offense he refused to submit to this demand; several ministers and churches supporting him in this position. When Oberholzer persisted in his refusal the conference excommunicated him from their "council," and with him all who had taken sides with him. It was a hard blow for Oberholzer to be thus treated, when he had been actuated by the purest motives—to be cast out when he had sought only to do good. As late as 1860 he speaks with sadness of the unjust treatment received and even then labors for reunion with those who, to their own injury, had rejected him.

Those excommunicated soon afterwards held a meeting and in October 1847 organized a conference of their own. This movement soon gained additional adherents and has since that time steadily increased in strength and numbers. Reference has several times been made on preceding pages to this conference as the "Council" of the Pennsylvania churches. It was through this organization that the correspondence with European Mennonites relative to mission had been opened. Through a long period of years Oberholzer was the moving spirit, the head and leader of this progressive departure, and to his influence it is chiefly attributable that those churches were won for co-operation with the unification movement begun in Iowa. After uniting with the General Conference this conference in Pennsylvania still continued its independent local activity. Because of its geographical position it has since come to be called the "Eastern

District Conference," this name also designating its membership in the General Conference.

From the foregoing it is evident that it was the progressive part of the Pennsylvanian churches that was friendly to the movement for union in Iowa. That these centers of progress, differing so greatly in external matters, but alike in spirit and purpose, extended to each other the hand of fellowship from the extremities of the inhabited land has, as it were, bound together all Mennonites of the entire country, and it presages in a beautiful figure the time when all the spiritual descendants of Menno Simon shall have set aside all minor differences and shall in the sunshine of fraternity co-operate in the work of the Lord.

Before proceeding with the narrative let us pause a moment and consider just what the General Conference is and what it is not.

1. Admittance to membership in the General Conference is open to every church that holds to the fundamental doctrines taught by Menno Simon; no matter what special name such church may bear. The professed aim of the Conference is to unite with itself all Mennonite churches regardless of all distinctions.
2. The General Conference will know of no branches or divisions among Mennonites.
3. The General Conference makes no laws for the churches. Her office is not to rule but to do mission work—build up the kingdom of God.
4. The churches constituting the General Conference have by their union not become something else from what they had been before. Each church remains

just what it was and retains all peculiarities she had if she so chooses. Each church retains her individuality as well as her independence.

5. The General Conference is not a separate class or division of Mennonites which may be distinguished from others by special doctrines or customs. It is impossible to class the Conference as such a division because her membership list contains churches which differ very much in customs and special views, and which to this day retain these differences precisely as they did previous to uniting with the Conference. The General Conference is therefore in no sense whatever a branch or division of the Mennonite denomination.
6. The General Conference is that movement which aims to unite the isolated forces of the Mennonite denomination into a co-operative union for the purpose of doing missionary work.

A real union, as has been previously stated, had not been effected by the First Conference. In order to bring the cause to successful issue it was necessary that the matter be thoroughly agitated during the ensuing year. Upon this work Oberholzer entered at once and that on his homeward journey. The idea how to secure a union as also the principle on which to base the same had their origin in Iowa. But to Oberholzer belongs the honor of opening the way for their introduction and acceptance. By the influence which he exerted through the Volksblatt as also through his personal touch with many churches he inspired others to interest and action. The results of the conference and his pleasant personal experiences had worked Oberholzer up to a high pitch

of enthusiasm and wherever he went he brought this to bear on others. On his way home Oberholzer stopped at several places, making this a sort of missionary journey in behalf of the Conference. A detailed account of that trip is preserved and as it admits of a glimpse into that early time of beginnings, a few extended extracts are given space here.

"Just this morning we arrived at the home of brother Hege and his dear family (Summerfield, Ill.). Filled with gratitude for the graciousness of our Lord which he has so abundantly manifested toward us poor "pilgrims" in our journey, I feel prompted also to write a few lines for the Volksblatt.

"But I must remark that when I had gotten pen and ink ready and wanted to begin writing I had to sit still for a while, not knowing where to begin among the multitude of interesting experiences which I have lately had and which now surge in upon my attention. . . . Let me begin with the thirtieth of May. On that day we visited a few families in West Point. The next day Jacob Krehbiel I. took us to Franklin Center. After having made a few visits there we proceeded to the so called "Prairie" in which section the Franklin Center church members live in close proximity to each other. . . I wish to make particular mention of the choirs of both the West Point and Franklin Center churches. The young people surprised and pleased us with their good singing. So also their parochial school, of which Christian Schowalter is the efficient instructor, deserves of special mention. . . .

"On Monday a number of dear friends once more assembled with us at the home of David Ruth and there

bade us a final farewell—in contemplation of which even now my eyes become moist with tears so that I am unable to write. . . . On the next morning we took our departure for Keokuk, Jacob Krehbiel and David Ruth accompanying us. Having found our steamboat in Keokuk these brethren also bade us farewell and returned. As our boat was to leave at four o'clock the next morning we took up our lodging in the cabin that evening, and so spent two nights and a day on the steamboat until we arrived at St. Louis. . . .

"We did not fare better in Summerfield than in West Point or Franklin. It is curious how it goes nowadays in the world. If one goes to strange places it does not take long before one is surrounded by persons who endeavor to take from one everything of value one may possess. Conduct yourself as you may, without some loss you will not escape. Now, dear reader, you will wonder what the western people have taken from us. Have they taken your money? (Oh! that would'nt have been much.) No, not just that. Have they sought to ruin your honor? Not this either, so far as we know. Then what was it those people took from you? Well, if it must out . . . they have taken our hearts, so we can not bring these back entire (and still enough thereof) to the east . . ."

After his arrival home Oberholzer refers to this trip once more. He says: "If we look back over the last six weeks and recall the crooked and straight railroads, the hills, valleys and chasms over which we have travelled; the rains, storms and dark nights we passed through, we must say with the Psalmist: 'The Lord hath done great things for us.' We have travelled about 2600 miles and

at no time were we more certain of God's presence with us than during this journey."

The proceedings of the First Conference were not given to the public through the Volksblatt but were published together with an explanatory statement in pamphlet form. These pamphlets were offered at a low price to the friends of the cause of union, the expectation being that in this way the movement could be brought to more general attention. It is doubtful, however, whether this procedure was of advantage to the cause. But though the proceedings were not published in the paper there was no lack of discussion and agitation through that medium during the year following. Besides others, particulary J. H. Oberholzer and Daniel Krehbiel repeatedly wrote on this subject, presenting it from the various points of view and urging participation in the cause. By this persistent and courageous agitation the cause was held before the general attention throughout the year.

We shall here let follow a few extracts of what some writers had to say during this period. One writer, signing himself "More Soon," says: "It cannot be expected that the noble purpose, that of elevating the Mennonite denomination, will be attained if only one or but a few churches adopt some plan and seek to do the work alone. The usual result of such action is simply that another division of Mennonites comes into existence, which indeed carries on its own plan but with difficulty, while the rest of the churches remain just where they were. Experience has abundantly taught us that such procedure leads only to increased estrangement, division and indifference.

"A clear insight into this situation of the Mennonite churches of America has given rise to the General Conference held at West Point. The plan which was after prayerful deliberation agreed upon has already found the sincerest approval of many. But if the Mennonite denomination is to perform her duty along this line it will be absolutely necessary for the ministers as well as the members to give up their selfishness and surrender their enormous egotism in such matters as are not clearly set forth in the Word of God, to the extent that no one shall think it his prerogative to compel others to accept his view.

"That unreasonable notion, that ministers ought not to be educated, must be abandoned and full sway given to christian education. How can it be asked or even expected of a man that he correctly and clearly present the truth when he is entirely deficient in matters of learning? . . . Then also that unbounded love of the world—in particular of money—so common among us Mennonites, needs to be checked if we are ever to gain the position of an active denomination. It is absolutely indispensable to establish christian schools of our own in which our youth may be instructed in the Gospel truths. (But that costs money). And then all sons ought to attend. (That too costs money). And finally ministers ought to travel in the interests of our denomination. (And again that costs money). . . . These great needs the Conference, held at West Point, has recognized and formulated a plan by which all Mennonites of America may be united and at the same time guided to activity and the fulfillment of her ecclesiastical duties."

When the time appointed for the Second Conference

was already near at hand Daniel Krehbiel wrote: "Conference time is rapidly approaching and undoubtedly many are awaiting developments with great interest—whether there will be a fairly general attendance or whether the cause will be barely able to drag on its existence. If only matters of minor importance will not be too stubbornly adhered to! Unfortunately it is still a weakness of our denomination that too much emphasis is placed upon non-essentials, thus preventing a healthy growth in the important functions which belong to a christian church. While other denominations are busily engaged in bringing the Good News to our poor fellow-beings who still worship idols, many among us deprecatingly shrug their shoulders as though it were wrong to support such work. While others are constantly increasing the number of their institutions of learning, we waste time in discussing the wisdom of having an educated ministry. A great and beautiful work—a work which God demands, has been undertaken by a small portion of our denomination, and the accomplishment of of its purpose will require many sacrifices and much self-denying effort. . . ."

Daniel Stauffer wrote from New Jersey: "This awakening to life in our denomination is a great delight to us - particularly with reference to the Iowa Conference. May the spirit which proceedeth from the Father and the Son kindle many hearts with love that this cause may survive and prosper. . . ."

A special opportunity to work directly for the cause of union presented itself to Oberholzer in the course of the year. Daniel Hoch, of whom we know that he had considerable influence among the Canada churches,

made a preaching tour through Pennsylvania during this time. This naturally brought him in touch with Oberholzer who could thus personally set the proposed plans clearly before him and could labor with him to win him over to the movement. That he was successful in this must be concluded from the fact that Hoch appeared at the next conference.

From what has been said it is clear that the cause of union had succeeded beyond expectation and that it was rapidly gaining in popular favor. After a long separation friends rejoice to meet again. A similar joy seemed to come upon many at the re-union of the churches which it was felt had begun. But the happiness was not unalloyed. The cause which had sailed so smoothly into sea was yet to contend with many storms before the haven of its destiny should be reached. Even the first year brought difficulties and in some form they have been present ever since. But nothing has so far been able to check this stately ship in its progressive course.

It was quite natural that opposition should arise against the new movement and it was in this direction that the young cause had its first trial. Not with all did the proposed union meet with welcome. Though no writings of opponents are accessible it is known from writings by friends of the cause that opposition was made. As evidence we shall quote from several writers. One says: "Opposition to the unification cause is after all made only by such as are devoid of the spirit of fraternity, or by such as are slaves to their own mighty "Ego." Another writer complains: "Many are filled with questionings such as these: and will all approve of what the Conference decides on? Will all support the Union?

What are these few who have undertaken this great task compared to the many who so far remain indifferent? They say: money, yes money we can waste on this cause and nothing will come of it after all. And finally some one says: And what do such and such men want? We know them only too well. We know their record. If such and such had begun this work then one might have confidence in it, but as it is, looking on will do for the present."

Another writer, speaking of the opposition, says: "This good plan could not remain without opposition. Indeed it is known that not only lay members but ministers themselves put unclean hands upon this peaceable, well-meaning movement by using an unholy pen for the purpose of defeating the aims of the Iowa Conference and of checking the further action of this christian "leaven." They carry on their sinister work in the dark by quietly sending letters to others and not only advising them not to unite with this Mennonite Conference, but warning them against the men who labor so unselfishly for the church and casting suspicion upon them."

How sad it is that men are often unwilling to let others help them, though they be in spiritual or moral need. Even Jesus and his devoted Apostles met with the experience that men declined to receive the higher gifts offered them. They too were maliciously misrepresented. It must have greatly pained the promoters of the General Conference to find that those whom they wished to help met them with calumny and accused them of evil intentions. However they were not discouraged. Nor did the attempt thus made to defeat the movement succeed with those who were spiritually alive

and conscious of the need of union. But with those who were cold and infected with the disease of factionalism this malicious antagonism served as a welcome excuse to continue in stagnant indifference.

A danger of another nature arose during the first year which, though it had nothing directly to do with this movement, might yet have brought the young and feeble work to an early termination. Reference is had to the destructive civil war which broke out at that time. It was several weeks before the appointed time for this meeting of the Conference when on April 12, 1861, the war cloud burst upon the land. But as the early part of the war was not of such alarming nature as to disturb the peace-loving Mennonites, visitors nevertheless came to the appointed meeting, and so while the government tried to retain national unity by force, the people of peace formed a union in love. But had the time for convening the Conference come a few months later it is very doubtful whether any one would have attended, and that would probably have ended the whole attempt at union. For by that time the country was already deeply involved in the deadly struggle while the people stood aghast.

We shall see how, notwithstanding the war and other hindrances, the work nevertheless prospered and gradually developed under God's gracious guidance.

CHAPTER V.

Plan of Union completed. Steps taken for the establishment of a Denominational School.

The movement begun in Iowa theoretically includes in its plan of union all Mennonite churches of North America. At the First Conference but a few persons from abroad took part. It had been possible on that occasion to do some important preliminary work. Final action was postponed until the next session in the hope that sufficient interest would have arisen by that time to secure a more general attendance. It therefore depended very largely on the Second Conference whether the work would succeed or fail. An organization which was to combine in itself such a variety of elements as the Mennonites of America represented, ought from the very beginning to bear the stamp of universality; a requirement which called for representation from various districts, not necessarily from many churches. Some of the more sanguine promoters of the movement entertained the hope that the majority of the churches would be represented at the next Conference. But this was more than could reasonably be expected. For the scattered condition of the churches, both geographically and ecclesiastically, rendered such a suddden union impossible. To reach all churches and remove all obstacles is more than the work of a few months; only gradually—in the course of many years can this be accomplished. Not crystalli-

zation but growth describes the process of unification under the General Conference. But let us now direct our attention to the Second Conference.

At the appointed time, May 20, 1861, the Second Conference convened at Wadsworth, Ohio. As in the previous year spiritual fellowship was cultivated by special services preceding the conference. The Con-

Wadsworth, O., Church, in which General Conference of 1861 was held.

ference report says: "The conference proper was preceded by five services for worship held on Sunday and Monday the days of pentecost. The Lord's Supper was also celebrated, almost all visiting ministers and others partaking with the members of the church." At that conference the beautiful custom was introduced of hold-

Present Wadsworth, Ohio, Church.

ing services in the intervals, especially in the evenings between conference sessions.

From eight different churches visitors had come as follows: 1. Zion, Ia. 2. West Point, Ia. 3. Wadsworth, Ohio. 4. West Swamp, Pa. 5. East Swamp, Pa. 6. Philadelphia, Pa. 7. Summerfield, Ill. 8. Waterloo, Canada. This, indeed, was but a small number to inaugurate the movement which should ultimately embrace all Mennonites of America. But the composition was appropriate. Persons living at great distances from each other and differing much in external matters met here to join in a common cause. Here were Germans lately immigrated, Pennsylvania Germans, and some

nearly English. Peculiarities of different nationalities and sections as well as of various antecedents were noticeable. From north, east and west representatives were present. Even in matters of dress, customs and views there were strongly contrasting varieties. But one thing they all had in common — a heart for the cause of God; readiness to put God's cause above self-interest or egotism; willingness to work for the welfare of the denomination at large.

Among those present we note some additions over the previous year. The two churches from Canada and Ohio were members of the familiar Canada-Ohio Conference; that movement having thereby allied itself at least in part with the larger one. The Summerfield, Ill., church is closely related to the Iowa churches in character and history. The three sections which have heretofore labored independently, we observe, are represented at this meeting. By thus identifying themselves with the same movement they were merged into one to the great gain of all. However by uniting with the General Conference the formerly existing societies were not discontinued. The Conference in Pennsylvania, as stated before, has continued its specific work until the present time. The Canada-Ohio Conference kept up its sessions for about ten years longer when it was discontinued. The accession of these churches was a substantial gain for the Conference, not only in members but particularly in working force. The Canada-Ohio Conference had capable leaders, and from Summerfield there came then and later men to whose ability, wisdom and labors, under God's blessing, is attributable to a great extent the successful development of the Conference.

In organizing the Conference the new additions were recognized by selecting Daniel Hoch of Canada as chairman, and Daniel Hege[1] of Summerfield as secretary. In the deliberations the first matter attended to was the reconsideration of the resolutions of the previous meeting. After thorough discussion several changes were made, but these were merely verbal and did not affect the sense. To the basis for union one article was added, viz. : "That no one may be a member of the Mennonite denomination who is a member of a secret society." That the Conference took this antagonistic stand toward secret societies is chiefly due to J. H. Oberholzer. During the first years of the publication of his paper he had already expressed himself against those institutions. As early as 1851 he had induced the Eastern Conference to take its stand against them. In his little book, "Oberholzer's true Character" (1860), he justifies his position with convincing reasons. That the Conference thus early took this decided stand against secret societies has proven a blessing and will continue to do so in the future, as it will serve to keep the denomination free from the deadly coils of that evil.

The resolution to establish a Theological Institution being approved, it was thought wise to add an explanation to this resolution. This explanation, produced by Daniel Hege, is a masterly presentation of the importance and need of christian educational institutions for the Mennonite denomination.[2] The following are a few extracts.

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[1] See Biographical Appendix.

[2] For the whole article see the printed Conference proceedings. German.

"Should some one question: Why are christian institutions of learning necessary for the promotion of faith in Jesus Christ? Does not faith arise from the preaching of the word of God?—Then the answer is: Yes, faith comes through preaching. But since so much preaching is done and yet so little is believed it is plain that not all preaching works faith, but that only such preaching is effective which labors with the heart and produces in it willingness to receive the seed out of the divine Word, and which secures an intelligent comprehension of the truth concerning the crucified and risen Savior. . . . We learn from God's word that it must be preached as a living personal experience, must fall as a seed into the hearer's heart and if Satan is not to uproot it before it has borne fruit, it must necessarily also be understood.—But since it is of such vital importance for every one to understand God's word, is it not then absolutely indispensable that the minister himself understand it, yea more, be able to make it clear to others? But to help the minister to obtain this ability, that is what christian schooling is to do. . . . Therefore, above all things, we need for the beginning at least one thoroughly christian Mennonite school, both as a help in the unification of the Mennonites and as a means toward the spread of the Gospel. . . ."

This explanation as well as the work of the Conference in general met with approval at home and in Europe. In an interesting letter, dated July, 1861, B. C. Roosen of Hamburg writes as follows: "As of unusual importance I consider the establishment of a school for the training of ministers and teachers. In the "Mennonitische Blätter" various views as to the desirability,

superfluity and even the dangerousness of scholarly education have appeared. That without any outside influence there now arises within our churches in America a sense of the need of thorough education is with us a cause for joy. What is said in the report of the Conference with regard to education has my fullest endorsement."

By other resolutions adopted at this Conference the way was prepared for the realization of a school. It was agreed to announce that the Conference was ready to receive contributions for the establishment and maintainance of a school, and it was further agreed to elect an itinerary minister who should labor for the cause of union, but should give particular attention to mission and school ; incidentally he was also to solicit subscriptions for the establishment of the school. For this important but difficult office one man among the delegates seemed particularly fitted. This man was Daniel Hege, at that time minister of the Summerfield congregation. He was unanimously elected and the sequel will show that the choice was a wise one.

When the proceedings had reached this stage those present felt ready to enter upon a formal union. This was accomplished by first agreeing upon the following resolution : "All these articles (those adopted at this Conference) shall be binding on all who join this union, and future Conferences shall be entitled to make changes or amendments only on a majority vote of two-thirds." Thereupon followed the formal union by signing, as below, the following declaration :

"Upon these articles of constitution we the undersigned declare ourselves as united."

Ministers.

Daniel Hoch, Jordan, Canada West.
Daniel Hege, Summerfield, Ills.
Jacob Krehbiel II., Franklin Center, Ia.
John H. Oberholzer,[1] Milford Square, Pa.
Ephraim Hunsberger, Wadsworth, Ohio.
Ulrich Geiger.
Jacob Hoch, Canada.
L. O. Schimmel, Philadelphia, Pa.
Henry Neisz, Wadsworth, Ohio.

Additional Delegates.

Jacob Leisy, Summerfield, Ill.
Daniel Landis, Pa.
Ruben Shelly, Pa.
John G. Stauffer, Pa.
Jacob M. Mayer, Pa.
Michael Lehmann, Ashland, Ohio.
William Hunsberger, Wadsworth, Ohio.

According to a remark appended to the record of the above proceedings there were others who would have signed, having expressed themselves as in full harmony with all resolutions, but who had to leave before the document was ready for signature. Who these were is not known.

These signatures were of course not binding upon the churches but only upon the person who had signed. However it was almost certain that the respective

[1] In the published Conference proceedings the name of J. H. Oberholzer does not appear. However it does appear in the report as published in the Volksblatt June 12, 1861.

churches would endorse what was done, as for each of the districts the names of at least two representative men were recorded who had a leading influence in their respective churches and upon whose advice the churches would undoubtedly unite with the Conference. That the action of these met with approval at home is evident from the fact that at their next sessions both the Canada and the Pennsylvania Conferences expresed themselves by resolutions as favorable to the General Conference.

Thus finally had the beginning to a union been made, for the attainment of which efforts had been made for so long a time. At last there existed an organization with which all Mennonites could ally themselves in co-operative activity. The General Conference was born. We now leave the work of foundation-laying and direct our attention to the work of building on this foundation ; observing how the Conference unfolds its activity in various directions ; how by repeated additions the membership multiplies, how her strength increases and she gradually becomes able to carry on work on a liberal scale.

There can be little doubt but that those sharing in the conference did not have a clear understanding as to what constituted membership in conference ; whether the Conference was an organization by churches or by individuals. The Conference itself had not made its position clear. One private opinion published anonymously is preserved. The writer's views do not agree with the present arrangement for membership. However his article gives some valuable views on the Conference and we quote below an extented extract :

"Among Mennonite people there are still current some

erroneous views with regard to the Plan of Union. The Union as well as its proposed school is a purely voluntary cause which does not aim to be coercive in the least. Members are to be such not by compulsion but voluntarily. So likewise all support of conference undertakings is to be obtained through free-will offerings. No whole church is to be drawn into this union. but only ministers and members who recognize it as a good cause and are willing to support it. Those who cannot recognize it as a good movement and will therefore not support it are nevertheless to be considered as dear brethren of our faith, and are not to be censured in the least for their attitude, provided they do not seriously oppose the cause. The aim of the union scheme is—to give to no branch any preference, nor to shut out any who adhere to Mennonite doctrines. But of course that element from which the largest number become members will be most influential. The General Conference will not trouble itself with matters of dispute which may exist between various factions or persons; such work were altogether too insignificant and aside from the real purpose of the Conference. Indeed it is the professed purpose of the union to overcome the feuds between factions, not directly but by indirect means, namely through instruction and enlightenment. If anyone has a complaint against a brother, a church or a set of churches, this General Conference is not the place for presenting such a complaint. The Conference has not come into existence for the purpose of judging the various sections of Mennonites, but for the purpose of edifying—building up the whole denomination."

The General Conference is not only the agency through which the churches are able to discharge their

common christian duties, but it is also a blessing to the churches themselves in several ways. First of all may be mentioned that through these meetings a better acquaintance with and knowledge of one another is gained among the membership in general. Instead of being limited, as formerly, in their personal acquaintance to the members of their own church, they now come to know and love as brethren persons who are members in distant churches, and thus the sense of fellowship is enlarged. Almost every member of the affiliating churches now has personal acquaintances in all churches. Through the holding of the conference sessions in the various sections of the country this process of becoming acquainted is facilitated. Again from this increased acquaintance arise several beneficent effects. The people's horizon is enlarged and narrowness of judgment is somewhat forestalled. By one on the mountain top a more accurate view of the country can be had and so a more correct judgment can be given with regard to it than by one who is in the valley ; he sees more and farther. If a man has lived all his life in the same neighborhood where certain customs have always prevailed, he is easily shocked when he meets with customs differing greatly from what he is used to. But if it is his fortune to have come in touch with many different social conditions and customs he will be much more tolerant toward such as differ from his own. The same may be said for differences in personal opinions. The observing and thoughtful person, who is in frequent contact with such as hold opinions differing from his own, will grow more tolerant and will take a positive stand on such questions only as involve a vital principle.

Then we may further notice that the Conference is a blessing through the fact that the needs which all churches have in common, as also the particular needs of the individual churches can be brought to general attention, and concerted action may then be taken for the satisfying of such needs. Thus it has already been possible through the Conference to adopt common Hymnnals, Catechisms, Rituals ; neglected churches have been built up ; and in many other respects by mutual assistance and co-operation improved conditions have been secured. Even where material aid is needed in a church the Conference serves as a convenient agency through which to secure assistance. In this direction a commendable beginning was made as early as 1861. As stated before, the West Point congregation had no church of its own, and, because of the stringent times, was unable to raise the necessary funds to build. The other conference churches came to their assistance, those of Pennsylvania contributing one hundred and twenty five dollars, to which the General Conference added twenty three dollars more. Since that time assistance could be rendered in different directions and it is not at all improbable that a separate department must in time be created by the Conference for the discharge of her duties along this line.

It is opportune once again to attend to the publishing interest, that is, the Mennonite Printing Union. A brief historical review, published in 1862, reads as follows :

"With this number (July 23, 1862) the sixth year of this paper closes. Onr press was first set up in 1852 in J. H. Oberholzer's workshop. (Oberholzer was a locksmith by trade.) Of course the trade had to rest

when the "Religioese Botschafter" began its pilgrimage—continuing three years. In 1855 no paper was published as the press was then used for the publication of 'Gottfried Arnold's Erholungslehre.'

"In 1855 the former owner sold the printing establishment to the Mennonite Printing Union, they to continue the work. Under this management the Christliche Volksblatt has already appeared for six years. This paper has so far been the most effective means for the spread of truth used by Mennonites since their settlement in America. It is therefore a cause for regret that the majority of Mennonite families have not yet subscribed for the paper. Were this paper generally kept there certainly could not be so many persons found who are ignorant as to the real condition of their own denomination. Is it not through the Christliche Volksblatt that fraternal correspondence has been begun with our brethren in Europe and that we have increased information with regard to them? . . ."

What the writer claims is true. No other influence had done so much toward upbuilding the denomination. No other means could be so effective. Through published reports the churches know of each other. The discussions carried on in the right spirit through the paper have an educating and unifying effect. The paper offers a ready means for bringing special matters quickly to general attention and so makes special efforts involving many persons possible. Without the assistance of the paper the mission assigned to Hege could scarcely have been successful.

Previous to the war the publishers were barely able, even with the most careful economy, to publish the paper

without loss. But when the war came everything advanced in price, while subscriptions were less promptly paid. During that period many publications, especially church papers, were compelled to discontinue. The Volksblatt also felt the pressure. Some of the stockholders urged that the size of the paper should be diminished and expenses reduced. Others favored discontinuance. But that they felt would deal the death blow to the unification cause. After much private discussion the company held a meeting during February, 1863. With what unselfishness this work was conducted appears from the financial report. The paper had at that time 706 subscribers. The subscription price being one dollar it is plain that no one made large wages out of the receipts from the paper. The report says: "If these subscribers had all promptly paid up it would have been possible—with the small side income – to cover all costs of publishing the paper, for all employes receive but very small pay and the most careful economy is exercised." Two causes mainly produced the financial embarassment. 1. Delinquent subscriptions. Some received the paper for many years and never paid. 2. Great advance in the price of paper. It had advanced to twenty cents per pound which was double the former price. Three ways out of the difficulty were suggested: reduction in the size of the paper, change from bi-weekly to monthly editions, or advance in the subscription price. But as it seemed clear that any one of these changes would reduce the circulation or curtail the usefulness of the paper it was after all decided to continue as before. That the paper was published for three years more (1863 – 1866) is well known, but whether any changes were made or

what difficulties, if any, were encountered could not be ascertained as copies of the paper for those years could nowhere be found; a fact which with respect to the General Conference history is greatly to be regretted.

* * *

After this somewhat extended digression we shall now return to the history proper of the Conference. By the resolutions of the Conference the greatest prominence had been given to the school question; a position which that cause held for a number of years, the interest of the churches as also the deliberations of the Conference all centering in this one issue. The school withdrew the general attention from minor matters to itself and held it long enough for the amalgamation of the various elements and until the union was sufficiently perfected and strengthened that it could endure even under severe trials.

The school undertaking was peculiarly adapted in several ways to promote the cause of union. 1. It was a business undertaking which required general participation and gave the Conference something to do. 2. It offered opportunity for money contributions and so enlisted the personal interest of the donors. 3. The direct personal sharing in the common enterpise helped to develop the sense of fellowship. 4. It was a worthy cause appealing to head and heart and gave to the supporting churches increased self-respect and dignity. 5. The assembling of the youth from the several districts in one common institution necessarily tended to efface differences in thought and custom and strengthened real fellowship. But this enterprise also contained certain possibilities which if unfortunately developed might easily

lead to the ruin of the school while the cause of union would be put to a great strain.

In order to obtain the proposed school it had been arranged that Daniel Hege should visit the different Mennonite churches and solicit subscriptions. Several causes conspired to delay Hege's entrance upon this work.

1. Such work was new among Mennonites. It was an untrodden road. The churches themselves had to be prepared for the visit. Without such preparation small success was likely to attend the effort. Then the solicitor must first gain information with regard to the churches, must know where they are and how they might be most easily reached. Then of course it was well to know in advance the size of the churches, their peculiar views, their attitude towards the Conference, in order to successfully carry on the work when on the spot. But all such information was obtainable only slowly and with difficulty in those days when there was practically no affiliation between churches, and no statistics existed.

2. This work had been delegated to Hege quite unexpectedly. As he was not a man of large means but had a family to provide for, special arrangements for the care of his family must first be made.

3. These praparations and arrangements could probably all have been made in the course of a few months. However another factor entered which postponed the work for a whole year. The war which at first had seemed but a small disturbance, soon to subside, daily assumed more direful proportions, and within but a few months had drawn the whole nation into its

awful torrent. Under these circumstances postponement of travel was very natural; this the more as Hege's own home seemed exposed to the ravages of war. So near to Summerfield was fighting done that the roar of the artillery could be heard there. The Volksblatt makes mention of this fact as follows: "Through private correspondence we have been informed that as Hege's own home is exposed to the terrible devastations of war, he will for the present not leave his family on the chance of thereby abandoning them to the savagery of war."

Nevertheless preparations for the tour were not neglected. Through the Volksblatt it was brought to general notice that Hege was about to enter upon a soliciting tour. The purpose was explained, the importance of the cause emphasized and liberal support encouraged. The matter was again agitated chiefly by the two men who had all along shown themselves faithful champions of the cause of union—J. H. Oberholzer and Daniel Krehbiel. The former labored particularly to rouse the churches from their death-like sleep of indifference, to enlist their sympathies in behalf of education, and to dispose them favorably toward Hege as solicitor. So for example he says: "As the best evidence of revival among our churches stands the fact that at the last session of the Conference an itinerary minister was chosen who is to visit all Mennonite churches in America, is to preach wherever desired, to visit in the homes etc. This most important duty has been delegated to our respected and beloved brother Daniel Hege. He is a man of scholary attainments and enjoys the advantage over many of his fellow ministers of possessing a classical as

well as theological education. As a man he is serious yet amiable. In social intercourse and in conversation he is considerate and kind, and approachable by every one; nevertheless he always holds fast to his purpose and convictions. In short, we most heartily recommend him, as in our estimation, he, of all Mennonites in America, is best qualified for the execution of the apostolic mission assigned to him."

Daniel Krehbiel devoted his attention mostly to the school. He sought to show the advantages of christian education and to point out the blessings which would accrue to the denomination through a better educated ministry. The following extract is from his pen. "Thoroughly educated men are an absolute necessity to the church, and the church has always had them from the apostolic age to the present time. Even our Mennonite denomination has not lacked them in the past and is not without them at present. Yes, Menno himself was an educated man and without his education he could not have accomplished what he did. The apostle Paul, being a learned man, labored and achieved most. Then why should we withhold our approval and support from an institution which under divine guidance will bring great blessings to our denomination?"

Efforts were also made in some other ways to prepare the field for solicitation through Hege. In the fall of 1861 the Eastern Conference adopted the following resolution: "Resolved, that Daniel Hege is to be received among us with fraternal cordiality as soon as he shall come here; and our prayer is that blessed success may attend him wherever his duty shall lead him." Several dialogues were published, one in the Pennsylvania German dia-

lect,[1] in which the cause of education and union was argued pro and con. This literary form seems to have been popular at that time.

Notwithstanding the fact that the war grew more and more terrible and times became more stringent, Hege made arrangements to begin his work in the spring of 1862. In order to pave the way for his visit to the several churches he published a request that all churches desiring a visit from him should send him their addresses. To his disappointment almost no addresses came. That this did not tend to encourage him is certain. And if we consider the difficulties which the tour itself offered, the antipathy to schools as yet so prevalent, the prejudices which many harbored against the dreaded innovations as also against strangers, we can easily understand why Hege hesitated. All signs seemed to indicate that the undertaking would not meet with satisfactory success. What Hege's state of mind was at this time may be learned from what he writes on April 2, 1862. He says: "The three months fixed upon in the beginning of the year in my request for addresses, have now elapsed, but only a few addresses have been received. When I perceived this discouraging fact I decided that since those to whom I had been sent showed so little desire for my visit, I would come before those who sent me with the question whether the war trouble and the financial distress were not sufficient ground for further postponement of my work. But as it seems that both the war and the financial crisis are felt less severely in the east it is now my purpose, without awaiting any further prompting, invoking Divine assistance, to enter upon

[1] See Appendix II. for this dialogue.

the task assigned to me and begin the soliciting tour before the middle of May.

"The nearer the time comes for beginning the work the more difficult, but also the more important it appears to me, so that not infrequently it rests as a great weight upon me and I am able to bear up and stand by my purpose only because it is the Lord's will. . . . ." At another place in the same writing Hege expresses his regret that no committee was appointed under whose direction and advice he might perform his work. As it was he found the entire responsibility resting on himself alone. He says: "Often have I regretted that I had to decide everything myself; for example, when to begin work, where and how far to go, and how long to remain at each place.—Of course experience will be the best instructor, yet a committee would have proven a great help."

When a whole year had slipped by and still the man failed to appear whose coming in many places was looked forward to with genuine interest and no small curiosity, impatient voices began to make themselves heard. People began to question: When will Hege come—or will he come at all? It was therefore advisable no longer to delay the solicitation of subscription. There was danger that the interest awakened would subside again, perhaps never to be regained. Hege hesitated no longer. In accordance with his announcement he entered upon his work in May 1862. Of the early part of his work we let Hege himself report as follows:

"Blair, Waterloo Co., Canada West, June 17, 1862.

DEAR BRETHREN OF THE FAITH:—Grace from our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. First of all, by way of reply to all the requests which have come to me

for reports of my work and journey, allow me to make of you the counter-request that you unite with me and let our wishes become prayers, united, intense prayers for the coming of the kingdom of God, Amen.

"Perhaps an apology is expected for not writing of my work before this, inasmuch as it is my duty to give an account to our denomination of my labors and the results. However I hope if I make even a brief report it will then not require an apology.

"On May 12, I left my home, Summerfield, and have since then travelled considerably more than one thousand miles upon ten different railroads, on Lake Erie, and on more than twenty-five different vehicles, without however being more than seven hundred miles distant from Summerfield). I have preached seven times, made three addresses, led three devotional meetings, attended several conferences and made a great many calls at homes. I find these visits at the homes particularly advantageous for the successful presentation of our common aim—the unification of the Mennonite churches, co-operation in missionary work and the establishment of a christian educational institution by and for Mennonites. But it is also these visits at the houses which contrary to my expectation I find the most fatiguing. To acquaint in a single day two to four of the most influential men with our plan, to receive their views on the subject, to become mutually acquainted with and to know each other, this coupled with the repeated conversations on church ordinances, customs and confessions offers more matter for consideration and discussion than the brevity of the allotted time usually admits of being disposed of, and so not infrequently a portion of

the night is also employed in this work. The result is that I have found myself compelled to seek a several days rest here with dear brother Samuel B. Baumann who has very hospitably received me. My intention is to again enter upon my work today.

"As to the success of my efforts I am as yet in the dark. Excepting my home church (Summerfield, Ill.) and Canada I have for the most part only acquainted the people with our purpose and plan, my intention being to visit those places again on my return trip. This I did because it was my purpose to attend the Conference to be held on May 30, at The Twenty, Canada, and so had to make my stay short. I shall therefore briefly relate with what reception our cause has met in Summerfield and here in Canada.

"To the Lord be praise and thanks that he disposed the hearts of the Summerfield church members far more favorably toward the cause of mission and education than I had expected. Indeed that missionary obligation was being more and more recognized and acted upon I had for some time observed with pleasure, though much remains to be desired in this direction. Nevertheless at least a willing beginning has been made in participating in mission work. But that the proposed school was felt to be something much needed and that so much was subscribed toward it was a genuine surprise to me. Those who know how young our church is and that even now there is a debt of 400 dollars upon the little church, dedicated January 23, 1859, and that at least 1200 dollars have been paid toward the church during the last three years, and this notwithstanding the fact that most of the members are but beginners and are

struggling to gain independent foothold for themselves, not a few having debts of their own—I say, those who know this will appreciate with me that the 400 dollars subscribed voluntarily for the school by the Summerfield church is evidence that a christian school for Mennonites is felt among us as a great need.

"Here in Canada my work until within four days has been devoted entirely to the "Old brethren." These people constitute the larger number of Mennonites in this section. To these duty of mission work or the need of a school are subjects entirely foreign and are therefore looked upon with suspicion and prejudice. However here and there I have met with some who manifest appreciation for these things and I doubt not but that through the present agitation, the many conversations with single individuals and families, the addresses before meetings, many will be led to reflect on mission and school with the result that they will become favorably disposed toward them. Much, very much could be done here for the spread of the Kingdom of God if only a general awakening of the missionary spirit could be effected. The number of Mennonites exceeds my expectation; and most of them prosper financially. From official statistics I have approximately computed that about 10,000 Mennonites reside in upper Canada; few or none in Lower Canada. In the section where I now am, in a circumference of about 60 miles the largest number of our brethren reside. There are eighteen ministers and about as many meeting houses. Most of the ministers I visited at their homes; the rest, with few exceptions, I have also met and have found them mostly kind at heart and honest minded, and everywhere

I was hospitably received; for which I again extend my heartfelt thanks. . . .

"I commend you all to the protecting care of God, dear brethren. Remember me and my work in your prayers. In love your DANIEL HEGE."

As traveling companion through Canada Hege had selected Ephraim Hunsberger of Wadsworth, O., because he was a member of the Canada-Ohio Conference and Hege expected that his presence would secure for him a more ready and welcome reception. How they were received is shown by the above report. That the aims which Hege pursued met with approval is evident from resolutions, adopted on May 30, by the Canada Conference, which read as follows: "3. Resolved that this council is highly pleased with the visit among us and the presence with us of the dear brethren E. Hunsberger of Ohio, and Daniel Hege our Home Missionary from Illinois; and believing it our duty to support him (Hege) in his work we recommend that a friendly reception be given him and that his work be supported by all the churches in Canada. 5. Resolved that this council recognizes it as the sacred duty of all faithful Mennonites of America to support the beautiful and evangelical plan for union by all christian means." The sincerity of the first of these resolutions was demonstrated by an appropriation of twenty-five dollars from the mission treasury toward the support of Hege, their Home Missionary.

Hege continued his labors without interruption, developing an activity truly astonishing, which, however, must have been very exhausting. As he pursued his work with such zeal, almost with haste, he found little

time or no opportunity for collecting himself and preparing reports of his labors. We have but one more brief report. It contains very little in detail of the work done, but as it is the last writing we have of this zealous and devoted man it is also here inserted.

"Schwenksville, Montgomery Co., Pa., September 18, 1862.

DEAR BRETHREN OF THE FAITH:— Grace and peace be to you. At last, at last we hear of Hege! But why did he make us wait so long? Answer. On the one hand he could not and on the other hand he did not wish to write sooner. So far as not being able is concerned, the fact is my time is very closely occupied, for I preach two to four times a week and during the intervals I make addresses, conduct devotional meetings, make fifty to sixty visits at homes. In so doing I travel sixty to a hundred miles, to accomplish which I have perhaps fifteen different companions and spend each night under a different roof. That this brings on much speaking and contradicting, questioning and answering and often more to hear than is comfortable—can easily be imagined. But how one feels who has for seventeen weeks almost uninterruptedly been under pressure of this sort, in which the mind is mostly occupied with speaking and hearing, sometimes until utter exhaustion—must be experienced in order to be appreciated. Nevertheless my heart goes out toward our gracious God who so sustains my health and strength that usually after only a few hours rest I am again able to pursue my exhausting work. Now if I wished I might use one day each week for writing. So far as this "not wishing to," is concerned it is not that I have not the good will to do so but it is this way: If I were to devote during the whole

time but one week to correspondence I would have to protract my journey one week longer—or in reality would have to cut it short by that much. For as I have broken up housekeeping (my wife and family are with her parents, household goods and stock are with friends) I shall have to hasten that I may set up housekeeping again before winter comes on. If I limit the rest of my visits to those churches and persons whom I may expect to find favorably disposed toward union, mission and school, or who will probably become so through my visit, and if during this time I press on with reasonable haste the winter will nevertheless be upon me when I shall barely have completed the task.

"My main reason, however, for not writing much on the way is because that would not be attended with good results. If I were to report my experiences from station to station and would only report one-sidedly that which is favorable, I would do what properly should not be done. If I would also report truthfully what is deserving of censure—that could only work mischief; it would not foster the spirit of union but animosity. Even if I were to omit names the experiences reported on the way would nevertheless be correctly applied in their locality to the proper persons, which would be productive of evil, and if not correctly applied would make matters worse still. So neither love of ease nor indifference, neither pleasing of men nor the fear of men is the cause why I relate so little of my experiences now. The only cause is my sincere purpose to avoid doing any harm through indiscretion. True this work has not been undertaken for my sake but for the benefit of our denomination and for the advancement of the Kingdom of

God. Toward the accomplishment of this the observations I have made must be published for the general benefit. This by the Lord's assistance will be done at the proper time, after the completion of the journey, through the Volksblatt and at the next General Conference.

"Finally, dear brethren, in order to give you occasion to rejoice and to give thanks to God with me, and heartily to pray for God's continued blessing upon the work, I wish to report to you that there are now subscribed to the proposed school 3150 dollars. This is a far larger amount then I had at first dared to hope for, and yet it is not even enough by one half for the realization of the good plan. But let us do our duty, pray diligently and trust in the Lord who is doing more for us than we expected.

"Within about one week I expect to leave this section and if suitable will visit our brethren in New Jersey, whereupon the homeward journey is to begin. Once or twice I shall stop in Pennsylvania. On September 28, I expect to visit Eph. Hunsberger's church, then Ash land and Cleveland, Ohio, and after a few visits in Indiana I shall probably first go home to Summerfield before I make my trip to Iowa. God be with you. In affectionate love your DANIEL HEGE."

It was not in accordance with the wish of many that Hege did not publish more of the detail of his work. The Volksblatt in particular had expected more frequent communications. For the editor expected that this would supply his paper with some very interesting reading matter. But we must support Hege in his position. He saw deeper and so was aware that the gratification of

this curiosity would be attended with undesirable results. His prudent action shows how well suited he was for this delicate and difficult work. Being an unselfish man, free from prejudice, full of love, clear-minded, firm, deliberate, of large knowledge of the world, highly talented and equipped with a good education, he was eminently qualified to conduct this work in which so many and widely differing persons should be won over and in which it was necessary to adapt ones self to so greatly varying conditions and circumstances.

The result which Hege attained justly surprises us. It is but seventeen weeks since he began the work and during this time the destructive war has been raging, shaking the nation to its very foundations and consuming its strength. By the thousand the men of the country are hurried to a bloody death. Property is destroyed and wasted by the many millions. In order to meet the constantly increasing expenses heavier taxes are imposed until the people groan under the burden. That under these conditions such liberal support toward the school was promised justly claims our admiration—particularly as the Mennonites had been so little accustomed to giving.

We are not able fo follow the later movements of Hege very closely because, as already stated, no further reports of his work are available. But some general facts can be given. He continued his travels in accordance with the announced plan. Almost everywhere he won the favor of the people and in every place some people were ready to support the school. In Pennsylvania the people were greatly pleased with his visit. Some one wrote from that section as follows: "Under the shattered condition in which the church in eastern Pennsyl-

vania is he has performed his task excellently—far better than expected. He will be long remembered by all who had the privilege to meet him and to hear his addresses.'' About the middle of October he had reached Indiana, the subscription list now showing about 4500 dollars, and by the end of that month the amount exceeded five thousand. On Sunday, November 2, he had the privilege of being with his own church, after which he went to Iowa, intending to complete his work there before the close of the year.

The success with which the work met was noticed with general satisfaction. Far beyond expectation did the plan of union meet with approval, while the financial support promised for the school was astonishing. No one seemed to have anticipated that so much heart for fraternity or readiness to contribute for a common cause existed within the denomination. After an icy winter when the white cover disappears and new life everywhere buds forth man rejoices. A similar feeling possessed those who followed the events and whose hearts throbbed with interest for the new cause. For a mild and beautiful spring seemed now to be coming for the Mennonites, destined to arouse the cold body of that denomination from its long winter sleep and to warm it through with new life. Very rapidly indeed the work had spread. Scarcely four years had elapsed since those two small churches had seized upon the bold scheme of forming a general union and already many hundred persons from all over the land were joining with the movement, and with mighty onward strides this young cause was making its influence felt in all Mennonite churches of America. From the pen of Daniel Krehbiel we have

an excellent picture of the situation at that time. On December 21, 1862, he says :

"If we look back we behold but a few years ago a few members of the churches of Lee Co., Iowa, assembled for the purpose of establishing more fraternal relations between the two churches in particular, as also to begin co-operative activity in mission work and other lines. And to-day the little fire kindled at that time has already spread so far that in almost every state where there are Mennonites enthusiastic supporters are found of this divinely favored cause, and more than five thousand dollars have been subscribed toward the establishment of an educational institution. Does this not stimulate us to sing with David : 'The works of the Lord are great, sought of all them that have pleasure therein'."

The future seemed full of promise. Quickly, easily, steadily the cause of union had moved forward. No bitter disappointment had yet been experienced. The cause had not yet suffered any severe trials. But as no cause, even the best, can escape difficulties and trials so this cause should not be left untried. Yes, even while the sky seemed so clear and the prospect so bright the clouds of bitter trial were already rapidly approaching. By the fact that the Conference had assigned to Hege the home missionary work without associating with him a committee she had really placed her own future into the hands of this single person. If his work proved successful then the Conference would prosper, if it failed the collapse of the Conference would be almost inevitable. We have noticed how the movement received a mighty impulse through Hege's successful labors. But his work was not yet ended. It was his personality

through which many had been won—upon which the eyes were directed. Through him as yet the different elements were held together. In order to cement these firmly into one organization they should continue to be in touch with him, especially should they be attracted to the next Conference through him. Then there were the subscriptions. So far these were but promises, not cash. They must be collected. Who could better accomplish this task then Hege? To him they had been made, to him they would most readily be paid. We then see how all the vital interests of the Conference center in this one man; how indispensable he is. If he should be taken away the blow must be sufficient almost to destroy the young and tender cause. But this very trial it was doomed to undergo. Hege died. Seriously ill he had returned from Iowa to Summerfield on November 22. The sickness developed into a very violent case of typhoid fever to which he succumbed on November 30, 1863. Faithfully and zealously he had served his Master and was permitted to pass from the midst of his labors to the joy of his Lord.

He had requested his friend Mary Leisy to report his death to his many friends through the Volksblatt. Of this report, which expresses such deep and heartfelt sorrow, we quote the first part: "With great sorrow in my heart I undertake my sad task of announcing to you news which will no doubt give great pain to all friends of the Volksblatt and of Mission. This sad news is concerning the unexpected and sudden death of our dear brother, minister and home missionary Daniel Hege, who returned from his western trip seriously ill with typhoid fever, to which he succumbed after a sickness of ten days."

This was a very sudden and unexpected event. As a stroke of lightning from the clear sky this shock came, paralyzing, as it were, all friends of the unification cause. Oberholzer expresses the general feeling when he says: "This indeed is sad news. My pen is unable to express the feelings I experienced when I read the report of the decease of my dearly beloved fellow minister and home missionary Daniel Hege, and I doubt not that hundreds, who became acquainted with him during his missionary tour, or who knew him before are equally distressed."

It was indeed a great loss which the Conference suffered in the death of Hege. Among those who shared in this work he was the best educated man. What excellent characteristics he combined in himself we have already noted. His heart was aglow for God's kingdom in the world in all its magnitude, and in particular he was thoroughly devoted to the Mennonite denomination. For this reason he would not use the denomination for the advancement of personal interests (as it never ought) but on the contrary he unsparingly devoted all his strength and means to its edification. Yea, even more. He consumed himself in this work. For it is altogether probable that the overexertion during his tour of seven months was too much for his nerves and constitution and brought on the fatal fever; an opinion which was held at that time according to the statement of one writer who says: "To which (school) our dear deceased brother Hege had so entirely devoted himself, and for which he practically sacrificed himself."

How Hege and his work were appreciated and how deeply his loss was felt appears from the following words

of Oberholzer: "He gave his money, his health, his life for the benefit of the denomination. It is very probable that not enough money has been contributed to him to cover the expenses of his trip and other expenses occasioned by his undertaking this task.[1] . . . If the purpose of the General Conference is realized Daniel Hege will forever be known as one of the most prominent of those men who led in the conquest of the stronghold of opposition and paved the way for the cause. Through his missionary tour as also by his written plans, which are so well suited for the carrying out of this Mennonite project, he will always be gratefully remembered by the Mennonite denomination."

Through the unexpected death of this faithful worker the denomination had also lost the man who undoubtedly would have been put in charge of the school, hence his death was also a loss to the cause in this respect; particularly as educated and capable men were then so scarce among Mennonites. That Hege was already spoken of as the man for the school appears from an Iowa correspondence which says: "Last summer and fall when Hege was travelling we entertained the fond hope that the school would soon begin and Hege would then be the man who should conduct it."

At the last session of the Conference it had been arranged that the officers, "Daniel Hoch (chairman) and Daniel Hege (secretary) should fix the time and place for the next session, to be governed in this by the results

[1] In this article Oberholzer proposes the raising of a fund to be given to Hege's widow. In 1864 135 dollars were paid Mrs. Hege out of the school fund "on a claim of Daniel Hege for services."

of the labors of the home missionary." No definite time had therefore been set for the convening of another Conference. After Hege's death it devolved on Hoch alone to fix time and place and to issue the call for another meeting. In order to prevent retrogression this should have been promptly done and a session of the Conference immediately called. However two months passed by and nothing was said or done. Everybody seemed stunned by the shock. The first to recover himself was J. H. Oberholzer. Undismayed he encouraged others to again lay hold on the work. He says: "We hope that the brethren will soon communicate to us their views with respect to continuance of the school enterprise and that this matter will be further agitated through the columns of the Volksblatt."

This call had the desired effect and signs of life soon appeared. John C. Krehbiel wrote from Iowa: "It is possible that this (Hege's death) might produce a standstill and collapse of our common cause. . . . It is therefore positively necessary that a session of conference be held which shall complete and put in order the yet incompleted results of the home missionary's labors, and which shall take the necessary steps for the continuance of the divinely approved and prosperous work already begun." He then calls attention to the fact that the duty of appointing the time for this meeting rests on D. Hoch. He also states that Hege had expressed the wish that the Conference be held in Summerfield and proposes that this wish be respected; but that either West Point or Zion are ready to offer the Conference a welcome. About this time an invitation came from Summerfield to hold the Conference there in accordance

with Hege's wish. Because of a desire to respect the wish of Hege Pennsylvania expressed itself in favor of Summerfield. Other invitations came from Milford Square, Pa., and from Wells Co., Ind. From various quarters expressions came encouraging the continuation of the good cause and various suggestions and plans were made as to what should be done and how to continue the work.

But all the while nothing was heard of Daniel Hoch and nothing was done with regard to time and place for the next meeting. Finally Chr. Schowalter took up the matter, wrote directly to Hoch and called his attention to his duty, informing him at the same time of Hege's desire that the Conference might meet in Summerfield. He also advised him to appoint some one in Summerfield to copy the subscription list and have it published in the Volksblatt. Thus reminded, Hoch appointed the conference to Summerfield for June 8, 1863. This date, however, did not meet with general approval as at that time harvest would be under full headway in Illinois. After a somewhat protracted consideration of this matter the session was postponed until October. As copyist of the subscription list Hoch had appointed Jacob E. Krehbiel. He, however, could not do this work because of an eye trouble, so Mary Leisy prepared the list and it was published in the Volksblatt May, 1863. It was a complete list of all the amounts subscribed and gave also the names of the subscribers. The individual subscriptions ranged from twenty five cents to fifty dollars. The entire number of subscribers was 1200 and the average amount subscribed was four dollars and seventy five cents. It would not be of interest to insert the whole

list, but it is of interest to know which churches contributed, and what the amounts were as originally subscribed to Hege. We therefore present this statement below.

1.	Waterloo	Canada West	$262.00
2.	Markham	" "	89.00
3.	At The Twenty	" "	133.25
4.	Summerfield	Illinois	366.08
5.	Clarence Center	New York	86.00
6.	Great Swamps	Pennsylvania	527.00
7.	Upper Milford	"	355.00
8.	Hereford	"	596.00
9.	Saucona	"	86.00
10.	Springfield	"	387.00
11.	Flatland	"	51.00
12.	Deep Run	"	109.00
13.	Shippach	"	7.00
14.	Branche	"	29.00
15.	Gottschall	"	189.00
16.	Philadelphia	"	107.00
17.	Baumannsville	"	79.50
18.	Metuchen	New Jersey	33.00
19.	Cleveland	Ohio	82.00
20.	Wadsworth	"	358.50
21.	Ashland	"	389.00
22.	Wayne Co.	Ohio	536.75
23.	Wells & Adams Co.	Indiana	
24.	West Point and Zion	Iowa	729.50
25.	From isolated persons		151.00
		Total	$5,738.58

Total subscriptions by churches as made to Hege.

It was realized that the coming conference would

be of great importance, and that matters would be decided in which the churches should have a voice, as, for example, in the location of the school. Accordingly it was considered through the Volksblatt what would constitute a suitable system of representation. Oberholzer proposed that every participating church should be entitled to two votes and that all churches should elect delegates who, upon presentation of credentials, should represent their respective churches in conference. This plan met with general approval and it is probable that at least some of the churches observed this arrangement.

Some preliminary work was also done with regard to obtaining a teacher for the school. For some did not feel disposed to go ahead with the erection of buildings without knowing that a suitable teacher to conduct the work would be obtainable. Among the adhering Mennonite youth of America none had so far secured for themselves higher education. There was little prospect therefore that a suitable person could be found in this country. Attention was therefore directed to Europe. In order to gain some idea as to the probabilities of finding what was wanted in Europe Jacob Krehbiel I. wrote to B. C. Roosen of Hamburg early in 1863, requesting his advice in this matter, and "whether a suitable man for the proposed school could be secured in Germany."

Evidently the unification movement was not broken up. The forces were rallying. The recovery from the severe trial was slow but full of life and strength. With unshaken faith in the Lord the prostrate cause was courageously taken up anew and pushed forward. In the name of the Lord most High the work had been undertaken in his name it should still go on.

CHAPTER VI.

Third Conference. School decided upon. Arrangements for building. Building erected; dedicated. Fourth Conference. Mission Department formed. Preparations for opening School.

The unexpectedly large and general support of the school enterprise demonstrated two things; first, that the need of better education was felt in the denomination, and second, that the school enterprise offered an open field for co-operation. The problem now was how to take advantage of this opportunity, and what steps to take for satisfying this felt need. As yet the Conference had no means at command with which to establish and carry on a school. The subscribers had not given money, but only promises. Unfortunately all the participants in the Conference were inexperienced in the management of such undertakings. Under these circumstances the first steps had to be taken as on unsteady ground. That so every step should be correctly taken was more than could be expected. It was no easy task which confronted the Third Conference.

Daniel Hoch finally fixed the date for the Third Conference on October 19, 1863, and accordingly this meeting began on that day in Summerfield, Ill., and continued its sessions until October 24. The forenoon of

the first day was given to religious services. The conference proper began its work in the afternoon, with Daniel Hoch in the chair. The election which followed called J. H. Oberholzer to the chair while Chr. Schowalter was made secretary.

Mennonite Church at Summerfield, Ill.

A formal presentation of credentials does not seem to have occured at this conference. However according to the agreement arrived at through the Volksblatt every participating church was to be entitled to two votes. As a ballot was taken during the progress of the sessions in which thirty-eight votes were cast, nineteen churches should have been represented. But according to good authority[1] only fourteen churches participated, as follows:

[1] Chr. Schowalter.

1.	Zion.....Iowa.	8.	East Swamps....Pa.
2.	West Point..... "	9.	Philadelphia..... "
3.	Wadsworth.....Ohio.	10.	Hereford ..... "
4.	Waterloo.....Can.	11.	Upper Milford ... "
5.	At The Twenty.. "	12.	Springfield ..... "
6.	Summerfield.....Ill.	13.	Schwenksville ... "
7.	West Swamp .....Pa.	14.	Boyertown ..... "

Churches participating in the Third Conference. 1863.

Held at Summerfield, Ill.

A disposition to learn from experience and to improve thereby began to manifest itself already at this conference. At previous sessions there had been a lack of system. The first thing done at this session, after the organization had been effected, was to make arrangements to expedite the business of the conference, yet so that it might be disposed of most successfully. A committee was appointed whose business it was to attend to the wants of the conference. An appointment of time for the daily programme was made. A committee of seven was appointed to draw up a constitution for the prospective school. Representatives from the different districts were put on this committee, as follows; Chr. Schowalter and J. C. Krehbiel for Iowa; J. H. Oberholzer and L. O. Schimmel for Pennsylvania; Daniel Hoch for Canada; David Ruth for Illinois, and Eph. Hunsberger for Ohio.

This committee organized with J. H. Oberholzer as chairman and C. Schowalter as secretary. Preliminary work for a constitution had not been done by any one. Accordingly these men were expected in a very limited period of time to outline a plan in accordance with which to conduct the school, and to adopt prin-

ciples and regulations upon which to a great extent would depend the ultimate success of the school. Unnecessary haste was certainly exercised here. For at this time there was neither a house in which to hold school nor a teacher to conduct it, no, nor any money with which to make a beginning. Surely it might have been foreseen that it would require several years in which to collect money, erect a building and get ready for the operation of a school. A committee would have had ample time during this interval to study the management and courses of other schools, adopt what could be utilized for their own school, and so draw up a constitution which should in all respects best meet the requirements. But this work was done now, and to the honor of the committee it must be said that, notwithstanding the disadvantages under which they labored, they succeeded in preparing a constitution upon which, had other conditions permitted, the school might have been successfully operated.

In this constitution the school was named the "Christian Educational Institution of the Mennonite Denomination." The Conference itself was to have charge of the school through a committee. Only well qualified men, thoroughly in harmony with the Mennonite cause, should be employed. The school was to be conducted in the German language; however, English should also be taught. The course of study should occupy three years. Admission was granted upon satisfactory certificate of good character, to young men not less than eighteen nor more than thirty years old. The students should spend three hours each day at "manual labor" for the sake of their physical and mental health

and for the benefit of the institution. According to a later arrangement, "each student should pay annually the small amount of one hundred dollars for instruction, board, lodging, washing, fuel and light." In the curriculum the greatest prominence was given to the study of the Scriptures. The direct management of the school the Conference delegated to a Committee of Supervisors composed of three members. This committee had authority to act for the Conference. The teachers—in special cases also the students—were responsible to this committee. All the school property was at its disposal.

In order to signify their approval of this constitution, the delegates signed their names to it. As this offers an opportunity to see who the delegates were, these names are here presented for the benefit of the reader.

Pastors.

J. H. Oberholzer. Christian Schowalter.
Daniel Hoch. John C. Krehbiel.
David Ruth. Eusebius Herschey.
Ephraim Hunsberger.

Co-Pastors.

John McNelly. Daniel Hirschler.
Levi O. Schimmel. Joseph D. Rosenberger.

Members.

John L. Ihst. Henry G. Schantz.
Jacob Leisy. Jos. O. Schimmel.
John G. Stauffer.

Delegates who signed the School Constitution.

An additional list of forty-five names is appended to this document. The Conference then as now showed its courtesy to all present by extending to them the privi-

lege of participating in the deliberations. The list referred to contained the names of these visitors. Most of them were members of the Summerfield church. We therefore have here an approximately complete list of all persons attendant on the Third Conference, and we can realize from it how small the movement then still was. The sixteen delegates with the forty-five visitors gives a total of but sixty-one. We may vividly realize the expansion of the cause since that time by contrasting this small number with the multitude of people which now assemble at the conferences. The additional resolutions adopted at this conference were of immediate importance, provision being made thereby for the continuance of the work already begun. In order to collect the money already subscribed it was arranged that each district appoint its own local treasurer, to whom all subscriptions made to Hege, as well as additional contributions, should be paid. These local treasurers should remit to a treasurer general whom the Supervisors were to appoint. The question whether or not to build does not seem to have been considered, nor was a resolution passed to build. All this was assumed as already settled. Indirectly the point was covered through a resolution directing the Supervisors to erect the necessary buildings. Ephraim Hunsberger, Daniel Krehbiel and Michael Lehmann[1] were elected to constitute the Committee of Supervisors. A sub-committee was also created with whom the supervisors were to consult in difficult or

[1] Michael Lehmann was born February 8, 1804, near Worms, Germany. About 45 years later he came to America. He lived at Ashland, O., for a number of years, then at Summerfield, Ills. Daniel Hege was his son-in-law. He died in 1879 at Halstead, Kan.

important matters. Six persons constituted this subcommittee, one from each district as follows: Daniel Hoch, Jordan, Lincoln Co., Canada; Samuel B. Baumann, Blair, Waterloo Co., Canada; J. C. Krehbiel, West Point, Iowa; Moses Gottschall, Schwenksville, Montgomery Co., Pa.; Jacob Leisy, Summerfield, Ills.; Christian Herschler, Haysville, O. The supervisors were instructed not only to erect the necessary buildings, but also to select the place where the school should be located; the Conference itself, however, specifying the district. The selection of the district was accomplished through a vote by delegates, with the result that Ohio was chosen by an almost unanimous vote. Of the "38 votes of the conference" 34 were cast in favor of Ohio, two for Pennsylvania, and two for the west. The choice was a wise one, for at the time Ohio was in the center of the settled part of the United States. Another committee, consisting of J. H. Oberholzer, Chr. Schowalter and John C. Krehbiel, was instructed to co-operate with the Supervisors in finding and employing instructors for the institution.

Heretofore no rule had been established as to how frequently the Conference should hold its sessions, but each conference had made special appointment for the next. At this session it was decided that in the future the Conference should hold regular triennial sessions; the officers, however, being authorized upon special occasion to call extra sessions. This arrangement has since been adhered to. At this session it was also arranged with regard to representation that any affiliated church may have itself represented through a member of some other church. There was as yet no definite understand-

ing as to the number of votes to which each church should be entitled. Admission to the conference was, after this, to be obtained only by delegates presenting credentials from their respective churches.

It appears that the deceased home missionary Hege had composed various writings of interest to the Conference which had been intended for publication, for a committee was appointed at this session to examine these writings and cause to be published whatever might be of value to the denomination. This work was never performed "for," so one member explains, "the committee never found time to do it."[1]

By the last resolution adopted at this session the desire was expressed that the "Mennonite Printing Union" publish an English paper. This shows that it was realized even at that time that the language of the country must be considered—that, if the denomination is to endure and progress in America, the introduction of the English language into the church must not be stubbornly opposed, but that English must be used as a means to build up the work.

The work done at this conference exhibits so much vigor that it is evident that the movement had not lost its spirit of undertaking. The founders and early workers in the Conference, though plain and untutored, were men of immense vigor and power of both body and mind, who would easily have been leaders in greater undertakings had their lot been cast in with such. These their powers they devoted in full consecration to the cause of union and progress among Mennonites, and the Lord has richly blessed their efforts.

[1] These writings are in the custody of the conference secretary.

The events which transpired between the Third and Fourth Conferences can not be entered upon in detail, as the sources of information are too meager. It is great cause for regret that for the period from June 1863 to January 1, 1867, no copy of the Christliche Volksblatt could anywhere be found. If, fortunately, it should be the case that part or all of these numbers have been preserved by some one, it would be a valuable service to the Mennonite denomination to save these papers from destruction. A good plan would be to place them in care of some one with whom they would be easily accessible to those who interest themselves in Mennonite history.

The supervisors met at Wadsworth soon after the Conference. As treasurer general they selected Eph. Hunsberger, one of their own number. The next step was to select the place in Ohio where to locate the school. Several Mennonite settlements were visited and the advantages and disadvantages of each were noted. Two places finally were given chief consideration, namely Ashland County and Wadsworth. Lehmann and Krehbiel voted for Wadsworth, Hunsberger for Ashland County. The majority of course decided the matter, but undoubtedly it was acceptable to Hunsberger to get the school to Wadsworth, as that was his home. He had not voted for Wadsworth because he wished neither to appear nor to be selfish.

The selection was fortunate. At Wadsworth was an active church with a bright and zealous minister. The membership of this church was mixed, some living in the country, some in town. The town, though small,

offered all the needed commercial facilities. Its one railroad made access to it easy. The surrounding country is one of the most beautiful sections of Ohio;—and this is saying much, for Ohio is renowned for its many picturesque landscapes. As site on which to build the committee selected a pleasing elevation on the west side of the town, near enough for convenience in business dealings, yet far enough away not to be disturbed. However the owner asked such an unreasonable price for this particular tract of land as to be prohibitive to the committee, wherefore they were about to give it up and select some other place. Just then it came to Hunsberger's knowledge that the whole farm (103 acres), including the desired site, was for sale at a reasonable price. Acting promptly, Hunsberger bought the farm for 6,695 dollars. A large part of this land was then sold in smaller parcels, only twenty-four acres being reserved for the school.

When the committee had progressed thus far in its work, the spring of 1864 had arrived, and with it the time for beginning with the erection of a building. Before anything could be done in this direction, it was necessary that money be furnished by the churches. This they promptly did. By March of that year contributions began to pour in, and by the close of the year 3400 dollars had been paid. This demonstrated that the promises made would be kept, that therefore it was entirely safe to begin building. A three story brick structure, thirty-four feet wide by fifty-four long was decided upon. The groundwork was finished and the foundation laid before the close of 1864. During 1865 the walls went up, and by the fall of 1866 the building was finished. The committee had given Hunsberger entire charge of

the building operations, and under his direction the work had progressed successfully. That he might not have too much work, the office of treasurer general had been given to Jacob G. Kolb of Wadsworth. There was at this time great scarcity of capable and experienced business men; a lack which may seem of small significance in connection with church undertakings — provided honest and well intentioned persons be appointed. But under these circumstances even more than when a man undertakes business for himself, business knowledge and judgment are necessary in order that all interets may be protected and advanced and the undertaking guarded against crippling waste or ruinous financial blunders. More experience and talent in this direction at this and later times would very probably have prevented the calamity which ultimately overtook the school.

Upon completion of the building it was discovered that, together with the land, it cost considerably more than had so far been contributed by the churches, although these had raised by far more than had at first been expected. According to the report made to the Conference the house alone cost 12,145 dollars. The contributions received amounted to the snug sum of 11,530 dollars which, however, was less by 615 dollars than the cost of the house. Moreover there was an additional debt of 1145 dollars on the land, swelling the total indebtedness to 1760 dollars. It was this debt which developed into one of the most vexing troubles of the school. Had the caution been taken to collect the money first and afterwards build by contract, at a cost within the means at command, the subsequent battle with debts could have been avoided. Under ordinary conditions the churches might

easily have cleared this debt. But as it was it could not be done. The liberality of churches had already been heavily taxed to make up the amount contributed. Though the churches were small their contributions averaged nearly one thousand dollars per church. As the money had been raised during the time when the country suffered from the calamitous effects of the war, it had required no small amount of self-denial on the part of many to enable them to contribute as much as they did. To follow on the very heels of this collection with a second one, and that while the financial crisis was deepening, must neccessarily have proven a failure.

As already stated the building was completed in the fall of 1866. The time appointed for the Fourth Conference was now close at hand. As was natural, arrangements were made for the dedication in connection with the conference session. The dedication of a common institution was something entirely new among Mennonites. Never before had they had a denominational school of their own in America. As this coming event was brought to general attention through the Volksblatt, a great number of visitors gathered for the occasion from the various Mennonite settlements and centers. It was an occasion which for unusualness will perhaps never find its parrallel among Mennonites in America.

Of the dedication there exists but one descriptive report. It appeared in the "Friedensbote" preceded by the following explanation: "The following description of the proceedings at the dedication of our school-building was written by our respected young friend A. J. Moser of the Sonnenberg (Ohio) congregation. So far as we know he took few or no notes but reproduced ver-

batim from memory much of what was said." As the editor of the "Friedensbote," A. B. Shelly,[1] was present at the dedication the correctness of this report is assured. The report is very long, due in part to extended quotations from speeches made. Extracts of this very interesting account are given space below in order to allow a glimpse into the dedicatory proceedings.

"When the announcement appeared in the Christliche Volksblatt that the school building at Wadsworth would be dedicated on October 13 and 14, and that this occasion should be a general celebration for Mennonites, there arose within me the wish to attend, to see this building for myself and to hear whether indeed it had been erected for a good purpose.

"Very early on the morning of the thirteenth, I, in company with several friends, started for Wadsworth and arrived there at about ten o'clock. When yet some little distance away we saw the little cupola towering above the new building, and soon we also heard the bell in it sounding forth its mellow tones and inviting the people to the celebration. Presently the school edifice itself stood before us. It is a stately building yet modest in appearance and, as I believe, has been planned very suitably to its purpose. It is three stories high, has a flat roof, in the center of which rises the little tower containing the bell.

"The upper story is arranged for a dormitory. The other stories are divided into rooms and halls as required for school purposes. In the basement are the kitchen, dining hall and storage rooms; in short, the whole

[1] See Biographical Appendix.

School at Wadsworth, Ohio, erected 1866.

building is nicely arranged without much display or unnecessary ornamentation.

"At our arrival the people were just gathering for the first service held in the school. We were glad to share in this and so hurried to the hall in the second story where preparations had been made for this occasion ; there being also a small rostrum for the speakers. I for my part entered the building and hall, moved with extraordinary feelings, and when the music of a hymn sung by the choir resounded through the halls my soul was filled with deep devotion.

"The opening remarks were made by J. H. Oberholzer of Pennsylvania, whereupon Christian Krehbiel[1] of Summerfield, Ill. took the floor. He is a young and powerful man of robust appearance, positive yet modest bearing and wears a heavy beard.

[1] See Biographical Appendix.

"This man, after he had spoken a few words, fell upon his knees with the assembled multitude and in a long prayer spoke with God so fervently and sincerely as has seldom been my privilege to hear. After the prayer he read Mark 11 : 22—24, where are these words : 'Have faith in God.'

"He then showed very clearly what constitutes genuine faith and that he who begins a work with confiding faith in God will succeed in overcoming the greatest obstacles. . . . By his faith Martin Luther nailed the ninety-five theses to the Wittenberg church door and afterwards, when summoned to Worms, he by the same faith stood fearlessly before kings and nobles. By a faith immovable Menno Simon, when he discovered many weaknesses in the teachings of preceding reformers, founded a church which in its doctrines coincides more nearly with Gospel teachings. . . . We too are to carry on a work which can never prosper unless supported by strong faith. . . . He further said that some may maintain that such a school is not a necessity inasmuch as our fathers did not have such institutions. But we must remember that our fathers lived under entirely different circumstances. They did dot enjoy such political and religious privileges as we now have, and besides they, in all probability, were without the necessary means for such an undertaking. . . . He then continued : How great is the need for such an institution in which faithful workers may be trained for carrying on the Lord's work ! Do not many thousand heathen still pine in the dark shadows of death to whom the glad tidings of peace have not yet been preached ! . . . This powerful address by Christian Krehbiel, which I have only imperfectly

touched at a few points, stirred me to the depth of my soul. I may well say that I have never heard a more beautiful sermon. He was succeeded by Samuel Klemmer of Pennsylvania who preached on Luke 14 : 17. This concluded the first service held in the school building.

"The preachers for the afternoon session were A. B. Shelly from Pennsylvania and John C. Krehbiel of Iowa. The former spoke on John 11 : 28, 'The Master is come and calleth thee.' He said that just as then when the Lord called the sorrowing Mary, so now to-day he calls all men ; yes, whole peoples and nations. . . . So too he has called us, a portion of his people, to work for the spread of the Gospel and the establishment of his kingdom. . . . But what have we done in the past? Where have we any educators for our youth ? To what place have we sent missionaries ? We have done nothing although we do not lack the means. . . .

"John C. Krehbiel spoke on Deut. 33 : 8. (This verse in literal translation from the German version reads : Thy right and thy light abide with thy holy man.) Basing on these few words he preached an excellent sermon. He said that what man needed in order to recognize anything was light. The first thing the Creator made was light that it might drive away darkness from chaos. . . . . He then spoke of the school, saying among other things : This school building, for the dedication of which we are met, is our house—something we have in common and it is to form the center of union for all Mennonites. From it are to shine forth beams of light to remotest places. Yes, all of us that are present from South, North, East, West,—from Iowa, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Canada, Ohio and elsewhere, we all feel

ourselves at home here and rejoice in saying this is *our* house. A few years ago we knew almost nothing of each other; yes, we scarcely were conscious of the fact that beyond the limits of our own home church there were other Mennonite churches. . . .

"After the conclusion of Krehbiel's address the afternoon session was closed with song and prayer. At the evening service two English preachers spoke, one of whom, Pope by name, delivered a brief but fitting sermon.

"The dedication proper occurred on October 14. Christian Schowalter preached the dedication sermon, his text being Isa. 63 : 16. He showed among other things how in olden times God had from small beginnings developed great things. . . . So too this school, though but an imperfect and small work, can be used of Him to add glory to his name. But to do this the school must own him as Lord and Father. He then reviewed how the thought of this school had first arisen. . . .

"After Schowalter's sermon J. H. Oberholzer read John 7 : 37. 38 and made the second of these two verses the motto for the school. . . . Thereupon he requested the audience, the hall being densely packed, to stand while he fell upon his knees and in heartfelt, fervent prayer dedicated the building to the eternal God. . . .

"This powerful and beautiful prayer constituted the real dedication of the Mennonite school. It was a sublime moment when the Supreme Being was thus solemnly and earnestly invited to come in and make his dwelling place there.

"The impression which this celebration has made upon me I shall never forget, and even now, as I recall those blessed hours, a gentle spirit of devotion fills my

soul. The dedication ceremony was concluded by the singing of a hymn specially composed for this occasion. In the afternoon, after having listened to a sermon by Schultz and a short address by L. O. Schimmel, both from Pennsylvania, we began our home-ward journey ; I for my part with a satisfaction in my heart such as sensual pleasure cannot give. For I had the consciousness of having witnessed a celebration which had for its purpose the glorification of the Almighty and the spread and establishment of his Kingdom. The lasting impression which the beautiful and spiritual addresses and prayers made upon me has accompanied me and has often since filled my heart with joy. . . . ."

With regard to the building itself an extract from an article by another writer[1] may prove interesting. The writer there says: "As already stated, darkness had hid the building from our view as we passed it on the previous night. But it presented itself to us the more beautifully after refreshing sleep. Plain, yet beautiful, stately but without showy display it presents a pleasing appearance to the eye. . . . . Only this much may be added here. Everything seems suitably and conveniently arranged. We have reason to be satisfied. It is my opinion that few buildings of similar nature, covering no more space nor having more stories, can be favorably compared with this building in advantageous interior arrangement."

The dedication over, the Fourth Conference began. The session lasted from the fifteenth to the nineteenth October, 1866. This was the first time that all dele-

[1] "Reise und Konferenz-Erinnerungen," by Chr. Krehbiel, Friedensbote, February and March, 1867.

gates came provided with credentials from their churches, and that the conference was formally organized by presentation of these credentials. Eighteen delegates were present, as follows: J. H. Oberholzer, Chr. Schowalter, A. B. Shelly, L. O. Schimmel, A. O. Moyer, S. G. Klemmer, L. S. Moyer, J. C. Krehbiel, S. B. Baumann, D. Schneider, Eph. Hunsberger, Jonas Neisz, B. B. Baumann, Chr. Krehbiel, Jacob Leisy, M. Lehmann, D. Krehbiel, Jacob Risser. These delegates represented the following thirteen churches:

1.	Waterloo....Canada.	8.	Boyertown.....Pa.
2.	At the Twenty "	9.	Hereford..... "
3.	Summerfield.....Ill.	10.	East Swamp..... "
4.	Zion.....Iowa.	11.	West Swamp.... "
5.	West Point.... "	12.	Philadelphia..... "
6.	Wadsworth....Ohio.	13.	Springfield..... "
7.	Salem..... "		

Two churches from Pennsylvania, Upper Milford and Schwenksville, were not represented. One new church, Ashland Co., Ohio, had been added. It is not recorded to how many votes each church was entitled; probably two, as at the preceding conference, no notice being taken of the difference in size of the various churches.

As the activities of the conference multiply there is a proportionate increase in necessary deliberation. Now that the building was finished provision had to be made for the inauguration of the educational work. This was done by adopting a number of resolutions. These provided for the continuance of the Committee of Supervisors. They should select one of their own number who should serve as President of the institution. The Sub-

Committee was increased to seven members, one each from Canada, Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, Ohio, and two from Pennsylvania. Three departments of instruction were planned for: 1. Theology, 2. German and elementary branches, 3. English and the sciences. The instructor in German was to serve as principal of the institution. In addition to the teachers a steward was to be employed.

What should be taught was set forth in a general outline, as follows: "Bible History, Christian Doctrine, German and English Grammar, Reading, Orthography, Rhetoric, Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry, Geography, Natural History, Penmanship, Pedagogics, Church History, Secular History, Music, Singing, Foreign Languages, and Drawing."

The compensation promised the teachers was very liberal. The principal and the theological professor were each to receive five hundred, and the English teacher four hundred dollars annually, in addition to rent-free residence and board for themselves and families. This brought their real salaries up to about nine hundred dollars.

The committee on teachers nominated the following persons: Christian Schowalter, German teacher and principal; English teacher, Isaac B. Baumann; and for the theological department Isaac Molenaar. After careful consideration the conference approved these nominations. Schowalter we already know. Concerning Baumann no information has been obtainable. Molenaar was at that time attending a theological institution in Germany.

About this time there seems to have existed a gen-

eral desire to create a center where all Mennonite interests might come to a head. Wadsworth had been singled out as the place for this. The beginning should be made with the printing interest. So it was resolved that the Conference make an effort to purchase the printing establishment in Pennsylvania and locate it at Wadsworth. It was thought that an advantageous combination could be made, the expectation being that much of the work might be done by students during the three hours which they were daily to devote to manual labor. But this plan was never realized, nor have other attempts, which have since been made in the same direction, proven successful.

The efforts made and the success attained for union and improved education attracted some attention in Europe. Among others who showed real interest was Mrs. A. Brons of Emden, Germany, authoress of "Ursprung und Entwickelung der Mennoniten." She presented to the institution a medal and a picture of Menno Simon. The medal was sold to the highest bidder, John Haury of Summerfield, Ill., securing it at twenty-four dollars. Haury, however, immediately re-presented it to the school.

In its inception the conference movement was born of a missionary spirit, and the prime object in forming a co-operative movement was to do mission work. Only indirectly had anything been done in that direction, the school being considered a means to that end. But now the Conference felt itself ready to aim directly at missionary work and so created a separate department, naming it the "Central Mission Society of United Mennonites of America." The special work of this department was declared to be "the direct and indirect spread-

ing of the Gospel and the upbuilding of the Kingdom of Christ." Part of the money received should, for the present, be applied to the support of the Javanese Mission of the Dutch Mennonites, while the rest should be used in assisting young men, preparing for mission work, to obtain the necessary education. This department was put in charge of a committee of three to serve respectively as president, secretary and treasurer. The first members of the committee were Jonas Neisz, R. B. Bauer and P. Yoder, all of Wadsworth.

With this a small beginning had been made—foundation was laid on which the later missionary enterprise might be built. Unacquainted as all were with mission work and its possibilities, it was necessary to move slowly, feeling the way out step by step to the great and wide field. But this slowness is no loss to the movement as it renders it more stable and enduring and ultimately capable of achieving greater things.

This conference at last fixed upon the definite system of representation which prevails to this day. According to this system every participating church is entitled to as many votes as its total number of members, divided by thirty, amounts to, and one vote to be added if a fraction remains; or, putting it in another form, every thirty members entitles to one vote, and a final fractional part of thirty to an additional vote. The smallest church is thus entitled to at least one vote and larger churches have power according to their proportional strength. This system has given entire satisfaction. Each church is at liberty to send as many delegates as they wish, but all together may cast only as many votes as their church is entitled to.

Through all these years of the rise and development of the Conference J. H. Oberholzer had labored indefatigably with great self-denial for the welfare of the Mennonite denomination in general and the unification is movement in particular. Within the conference these unselfish services were recognized and appreciated, as evidenced by the fact that they presented their aging leader one hundred dollars ; desiring thereby to offer something by way of compensation for the many ill-paid services rendered. But what he did was not done for the sake of perishable money. Nor can his services to the Mennonite denomination ever be valued in money. His work was that of a true benefactor. And his labors were richly blest—blest because he did his work unselfishly and sought no private ends of his own under cover of the general work. As long as the General Conference remains in the hands of such zealous, self-giving leaders it will not be wanting in successful continuance.

Soon after this conference session a change was made in the Christliche Volksblatt. As "Religioeser Botschafter" it had begun in 1852. In 1856 the form was enlarged and the name changed to 'Christliches Volksblatt." Under this name it appeared for ten years. Another change was made in January, 1867. The paper, as before, remained property of the "Mennonite Printing Union", but its name was changed to "Der Mennonitische Friedensbote". Editors also were changed. J. H. Oberholzer, founder of the paper and editor up to this time, withdrew and A. B. Shelly, a young and capable man, succeeded him. The size of the paper was reduced, but the number of pages increased. During the first two years it appeared as a monthly, after that as a bi-weekly.

The conference had instructed the secretary to address an open letter to all Mennonites of America, setting before them the conference movement and the school enterprise and inviting them to join hands and to share in the work. This letter appeared, April 1867, in the Friedensbote. The Conference and her aims received almost no mention in it, but it contained a very kind and cordial invitation to unite with the unification movement.

The conference had done all it could in making preparations for putting the school into operation. It now devolved upon the supervisors to see to it that these resolutions were executed. First of all teachers had to be employed. For though the conference had extended a call to the persons nominated, it still remained for them to accept. It was at this point that difficulties arose. Isaac Baumann declined. Isaac Molenaar[1] was at that time studying theology in Germany. Attention had been directed to him through B. C. Roosen. A correspondence was opened with him. He was disposed to accept the call, but as his health began to fail he was finally compelled to inform the committee that he could not enter this work.

At first it seemed that Schowalter could also not be secured. Only a short time before this he had been called to the pastorate of the Zion church in Iowa. He was so popular with his people that when the call to the school came, the church after much deliberation decided to answer the committee that they could not spare their minister. This left the committee without any teachers ;

[1] He was the son of John Molenaar (died 1869), Mennonite minister at Monsheim, Hessen-Darmstadt, Germany.

but without instructors the school could not begin. It had been expected that by the ensuing spring the school would begin. But when spring came, the committee had not yet succeeded in securing teachers. Something definite must speedily be done if the coming fall should see the opening of the school. The committee believed Schowalter to be the man best qualified to inaugurate and conduct the school and therefore called of God to take charge of it. A second writing was therefore addressed to Schowalter's church and the claims of the cause upon Schowalter urged upon them. The church now felt that it could refuse no longer and subordinating their own local interests to the wider and greater interests of the denomination, they yielded, though with heavy hearts, and allowed Schowalter to accept the call.

Meanwhile summer had come. It was now impossible for Schowalter to remove from Iowa to Wadsworth and complete the necessary pre-arrangements in time to open the school in the fall. Moreover the English teacher had not yet been secured; it being thought that with less than two teachers the school could not be begun. For these and other causes postponements were repeatedly made. In July a prospectus had been issued stating the conditions of admission but the time for opening was not stated. Here and there were young men ready to enter and some were growing impatient. For example the following query appeared in the Friedensbote: "When will the school begin? Upon this almost daily recurring question we are still unable to give definite reply. The expectation, however, is that at the most the school shall begin within a few months. We ourselves are anx-

ious that it begin soon or that the committee try to inform us when the work is to begin."

Finally, toward the close of the year, A. Fritz[1] was secured as English teacher. Other arrangements were also completed, so it was announced that the school would open her doors and enter upon her work on January 2, 1868,—more than a year after the dedication.

With this we have come to the close of an important period of the Conference history. The Conference is now a well organized body. School is now provided for in that the Conference owns a house for this purpose. Teachers are engaged and the work is ready to begin. Arrangements have been made for participation in and the carrying on of mission work. Publication has received some attention. It was the time of beginnings. In calling this the period of organization let this not be understood to mean that all elementary work is now finished. What is meant is that sufficient fundamental work has been done that the conference may now, as an organized institution, carry on its various lines of work; but that nevertheless much still remains to be done in arranging for the undertaking of additional phases of activity. So long as the Conference remains a useful institution it must be capable of changing and adapting its methods and means to the various changing circumstances and demands. It had required eight years to bring the organization to this stage of development. The movement, begun so small, had spread until it now included thirteen churches with a total membership of about one

[1] He was not a Mennonite. The committee was compelled to act contrary to the conference instructions, no English teacher being available within the Mennonite denomination.

thousand. New life and great joy was felt throughout the Mennonite denomination as the direct result of this movement. Commendable zeal was manifested for the cause, for in these few years more than eleven dollars per member had been contributed toward a school, and in addition a considerable amount was contributed toward the Java Mission and mission work at home. It was a period of awakening, of joyful activity. And still greater things were expected of the future when this movement under the guidance of God should mature its blessed fruits.

PART THIRD.

EXPERIMENTAL PERIOD.

The Conference experiments and has some trying experiences. This period covers eleven years; from the opening of the school January 2, 1868 to its abandonment, December 31, 1878.

In the first attempt at co-operation by the newly formed union it was inevitable that the various peculiarities of custom and aim should manifest themselves and occasionally clash upon each other. This of course must result in more or less friction and misunderstanding. If the Conference should continue to exist it had to endure the shocks arising from such differences and the differences themselves had to be reduced.

Every undertaking entered upon by inexperienced persons is subjected to trials arising from blunders of inexperience. The General Conference had such a beginning and could therefore not escape such trials.

In this section are recorded the adversities and difculties with which the Conference has had to battle and by which she was sorely tried in her first attempt at carrying on a common work but over which she has triumphed.

CHAPTER VII.

School opened. Its early Career. Van der Smissen called. Fifth General Conference. Western Conference organized. School—later Career; Troubles arise; Change in Teachers; Financial Straits; Controversy over admission of women. Church Hymnal. Publication. Incorporation of School. First Graduates. Mission.

In her process of development the Conference has now entered upon a new stage—the carrying on of a common work. From the opening of her school at Wadsworth dates the activity proper of the Conference. For all that had so far been done was chiefly preliminary and preparatory to the inauguration of their enterprise. The whole procedure may be compared to what occurs in the rise of a business enterprise. Suppose a company starts a manufactory. First of all a number of persons meet who discuss the feasibility of the project and make plans for it. By and by a company is formed. Plans for buildings and the like are adopted. General arrangements for the operation of the undertaking are made and finally a business manager is appointed. But in all this the company has not yet reached the point when the thing aimed at is accomplished. This it has reached only after the factory has been set in motion in accordance with given instructions. After that the company simply keeps a watchful eye on the work, receives reports, gives general instructions affecting the welfare of the undertak-

ing, while the work itself is carried on through rep-reprsentatives. The Conference is, as it were, a company in which the individual church members are the responsible and interested shareholders, the various phases of activity of the Conference constituting the business carried on under the management of committees. From these committees the members receive reports as to the condition and needs of their respective departments, and to them they give instructions as to what they wish to have realized. In entering upon the operation of the school the Conference had reached the latter stage of development as a business organization.

The date for beginning the school had been fixed for January 2, 1868. Before the close of the old year students from more distant places began to arrive. Principal Schowalter, who had already established himself and family in the building, gave them a cordial welcome. From abroad thirteen young men presented themselves, eleven of these taking lodgings in the school. These thirteen represented five different states, as follows: Illinois (Summerfield) three, Iowa one, Pennsylvania four, Indiana one, Ohio four. On the opening day eleven more were added to this number, these coming from Wadsworth and vicinity. Of the total number at least thirteen came from Mennonite homes. In the presence of the Committee of Supervisors, principal Schowalter, instructor A. Fritz and the students the actual school work was begun. The opening act was a devotional exercise conducted by the Supervisors and the Principal. Then the teachers acquainted themselves with the students, examined them as to their knowledge, made the necessary classification

and acquainted the students with the daily program and the house rules.

Thus the first Mennonite denominational school in America could begin its first session with the very nice number of twenty-four young men. That was an important moment in Mennonite history when that company of young people met for the first time. It was the initial step in the direction of enlightenment and mental as well as spiritual liberation of a pious and capable people; it was then that the march of progress began under which that which is noblest in man is given opportunity to develop and express ifself; then the process of leavening began which is gradually affecting all the Mennonites of America, strengthening the denomination and not only keeping it from ruin but re-establishing it in a new lease of life and usefulness.

During the first three months term of school there were no additions to the number of students. Schowalter very much desired that a greater number of Mennonite young men might attend the institution built for them, and he urged this very strongly upon the parents. However the second term did not bring the desired increase. For at the close of the first term sixteen of the old students dropped out and only eight new ones came in, giving a total attendance of but sixteen. Of these the greater number, however, were Mennonites. In this decline in attendance the school at Wadsworth underwent the same experience that most other schools undergo. When the work is new it is prominently before the attention of all and the novelty attracts many, particularly from the vicinity. The novelty however soon wears off, the school becomes a common place in life

and with the disappearance of the transient interest the school drops to a normal attendance.

Undoubtedly it will afford the reader pleasure to get a glimpse into the inner life of the first Mennonite school in America. For this an opportunity is offered through a description given by Daniel Krehbiel upon a visit to the institution. Of this description the following is an extract: "After supper a short time was spent in conversation with the principal until the time arrived for evening devotionals, at which exercise all the students lodging in the building, ten in number, were present. Soon after this I retired. At five o'clock in the morning the bell gave the signal to the students to arise. Very soon I heard foot-steps in the rooms above me and not long afterwards all were gathered in the school room busy at reading and studying. For breakfast the bell rang again. After breakfast morning service was held which consisted in singing, reading a selection from Scripture and prayer. Class sessions begin at eight o'clock and continue until one P. M. I attended alternately the German and English classes and found it very interesting. The German work closed with instruction in singing. I was agreeably surprised to observe that they were able after so brief a period of instruction to render music in four parts with pleasing success. At one o'clock dinner was served. After dinner the students spend several hours at manual labor in various employments as circumstances may direct. Some also work at trades such as carpentering and shoe making. . . . When I returned to the institution at eight o'clock in the evening the students were in the chapel singing to the accompaniment of the organ. 'Surely,' I said to

myself, 'it is pleasant to be here.' Music, singing, reading, studying, praying and by way of variation some physical exercise, with that one ought to be able to satisfy himself."

About this time general attention was largely centered on the school. It was the cause to which contributions had been made and which had now so far developed that young men from various churches were actually being instructed and trained for work inthe Lord's vineyard. Information pertaining to the school was eagerly sought. There was especially large demand for photographs of the building. Pictures of various sizes had been taken and these were offered for sale. In a short time more than one hundred dollars worth were disposed of. A general enthusiasm for the common cause not unlike patriotism prevailed. There seemed to be a fair prospect that Mennonite denominational life would pulsate through this school as through its great heart. The school was centrally located and common property of all. Here a new intellectual and spiritual life was growing. At this place were held the committee meetings and from here the business of the Conference was transacted. Here were held the Canada and Ohio Conferences and for a long time the General Conference held all its sessions at this central gathering place.

As yet the teaching force had not been completed in accordance with the conference instructions, the chair of theology being still vacant. Previous to opening the school the search for a suitable man had been in vain. Finally, when the school was already in operation the prospect brightened, as there now seemed to be some promise that a man thoroughly educated and successful

in the ministry might be engaged for this position. This man was Carl J. van der Smissen[1] of Friedrichstadt, Silesia, Germany. Already in 1867 the supervising committee had extended a call to him through Chr. Schowalter but he had immediately declined. In the following year the call was repeated with increased urgency. As van der Smissen's friends advised him to accept the call he made a more favorable reply. He proposed to accept the call if certain matters upon clearer presentation would prove satisfactory and if certain conditions would be agreed to. The conditions were that his expenses be paid for a visit to and study of institutions in Germany similar to the one in America; that the expenses of removal from Germany to America be paid; that the position offered him be permanent and the support of himself and family be guaranteed; and that two hundred dollars be annually paid toward defraying the expenses of his son at college until he should have completed his studies.

At first these demads seemed greater to the committee than the churches would be able to meet. However, when the churches were informed of the situation they soon proved the contrary. Summerfield, as was often the case in those days, led in the matter. In one of her councils this church appropriated out of her treasury two hundred and fifty dollars towards paying the expenses of van der Smissen's removal to America. Similar action was soon afterwards taken by the Iowa churches. With the rest of the churches this example also found willing imitation so that within a few weeks the thousand dollars necessary for this purpose were at disposal. Conse-

[1] See Biographical Appendix.

quently van der Smissen's conditions could be agreed to and his services engaged.

The removal occurred toward the close of the year 1868. Upon his arrival in America van der Smissen spent a few weeks among the churches of Pennsylvania. He writes of this visit, as follows: "The reception given the newcomers in Pennsylvania was very encouraging. Of course day by day and at every turn it was evident that they had come into a new world; the familiar home customs were unknown here, perhaps even gave offense. And then the Pennsylvanian language—how strange it sounded to the newcomer! It was not at all an easy matter to understand one another. . . ." In another place he says: "Not one hour had we been there (Quakertown) in the pleasant, hospitable home, when the feeling of strangeness already subsided and now followed days and weeks so rich in kindnesses shown us that we in all humility had again and again to confess our unworthiness. From Quakertown to Philadelphia might appropriately form the heading for one section of an autobiography should I wish to write one; and this section would be richer in content than many sections of my previous life."

The arrival at Wadsworth and the settlement in the institution occurred in the last days of the year. In the institution there was great satisfaction over this gain in teaching force. Schowalter, writing of this time, says: "The Lord has been gracious to us in a special way in that he has given to us, to the institution, nay, to the whole Mennonite brotherhood, the dear brother and theological professor C. J. van der

Smissen together with his dear family. That the arrival of this dear brother was for us a special occasion, you will readily perceive. There was general rejoicing over this addition to our family and as it came just at the close of the year we entered upon the year 1869 with happy hearts."

The second school year, begun on November 2, 1868, had had an auspicious beginning. An encouraging increase in attendance had taken place. It was felt as an especially gratifying fact that a larger number of Mennonite young men took advantage of the educational facilities offered. Of these there were eighteen. Referring to these, Schowalter says: "Although there are but few among this number who are preparing for the work for which our institution particularly exists, we nevertheless entertain the hope that all our students shall carry away something to their homes and into their later lifework which shall prove a blessing both to them and our denomination." The total number of students now was thirty, of whom seventeen lodged in the school dormitory. The increased attendance was evidence that there was a growing interest and confidence in and appreciation of the school. With van der Smissen added to the teachers staff and this goodly number of students, considering the newness of the undertaking, the school enterprise was now in a prosperous condition.

With the year 1869 came the time for the regular triennial session of the Conference. Accordingly the Fifth General Conference was held May 31 to June 3, 1869, at Wadsworth. This time it met in the spring instead of the fall. The request for the earlier session came from the school, as from that quarter "the demand

was made for an earlier meeting of the General Conference, and this demand was re-enforced by several reasons which led the officers to believe it their duty to yield and have an earlier meeting." Churches were represented as shown in the following table:

	Church.	*Place.*	*Delegates.*	*Votes.*
1.	Summerfield	Illinois	Chr. Krehbiel, Joh. Schmitt, Jac. Leisy, M. Lehmann	6
2.	Salem	Dayton, Ia.	Daniel Krehbiel	2
3.	West Point	Iowa	J. C. Krehbiel	3
4.	Zion	Franklin, Ia.	Chr. Schowalter	5
5.	Cleveland	Ohio	Daniel Krehbiel	1
6.	Salem	Haysville, O.	Jacob Risser	1
7.	Wadsworth	Ohio	Eph. Hunsberger	3
8.	Deep Run	Bucks Co., Pa.	Eli Fritz	2
9.	East Swamp	" "	L. O. Schimmel	3
10.	Flatland	" "	Wm. B. Moyer	1
11.	Gottschall	Montgomery Co., Pa.	Moses Gottschall, Sam. Langacker	4
12.	Hereford	Berks Co., Pa.	J. F. Funk	5
13.	Philadelphia	Pennsylvania	Sam'l Klemmer	2
14.	Saucona	Lecha Co., Pa.	W. H. Oberholzer	2
15.	Springfield	Pennsylvania	Sam'l Mayer	4
16.	Upper Milford	Lecha Co., Pa.	Peter Mayer	2
17.	West Swamp	Bucks Co., Pa.	J. H. Oberholzer, A. B. Shelly	6
			Total Votes	52

Representation at Fifth General Conference, 1869, held at Wadsworth, Ohio.

Up to this time the several districts which from the beginning had joined with the conference movement had remained faithful to it. At the Fifth Conference, however, no representatives appeared from Canada. To withdraw now while the movement was still small and weak and had resting upon it the assumed obligations for the school was no light blow. It was a blow on the

one hand because of the withdrawal of financial support, and on the other hand because of the discouraging effect such action could not help having upon the other participants. The withdrawing churches, however, were the greater losers in the end in that they shut themselves off from the benefits arising from the co-operation and larger fellowship. From within this secession does not seem to have originated, but apparantly one, John Brennemann, came among them from elsewhere and influenced the churches to take this attitude. It is sincerely to be hoped that these churches, with others closely associated with them, shall ultimately reunite with the movement they helped to originate and which has since so successfully developed. For accuracy's sake it needs to be stated here that these churches did not yet entirely withdraw; for at the Sixth Conference one of their number once more joined hands with her sisters. Even after the churches as such no longer sent delegates to the Conference individuals still shared in the work, and for a number of years the district continued to be represented on the sub-committee of school supervisors through Jacob Hoch.

Notwithstanding this loss which the Conference sustained the total number of churches represented at the Conference had increased. Instead of thirteen as at the last session there were now seventeen churches. One church had been added from Ohio, one from Iowa, and five from Pennsylvania. At this session the proportionate system of representation was for the first time in operation. This offers an opportunity of ascertaining at least approximately the total numerical strength of the Conference. The entire number of votes for all churches

was fifty-two. Deducting for conservative estimate one-half a vote from each church for the vote allowed for a fraction of thirty members, we have say forty-four votes representing thirty members each, or a grand total for the co-operating churches of 1320; a very respectable number when it is remembered that but nine years before the movement had begun with scarcely 200 members.

In the deliberations of this session very little was done looking to new enterprises, but attention was chiefly given to the setting in order of various matters which came up in connection with work already begun. After years of planning and arranging a sort of recess was taken for rest and in order to see and enjoy what had so far been accomplished; to see how the seed sown would grow,—like the farmer who after careful seeding rests and watches the growth of his crops. The delegates had hurried to Wadsworth in order to delight themselves in witnessing the growth of their common crop—the school. However the situation was not such as to furnish unalloyed pleasure. As not infrequently insects or wet or cold damage the crop to the farmer's discomfiture so disorders appeared in the school which, if they did not discourage, must have greatly pained the friends of the institution.

As already indicated this session occurred earlier than usual because of a request from the school. The request was made for two reasons, first because of misunderstandings and friction which had arisen between members of the faculty, for the removal of which the Conference now made special arrangements; and secondly that Schowalter might be granted release from his position in the school to return to the ministry of his church. His church had only reluctantly yielded and

permitted him to take up the school work. They had since tried in vain to find some one to fill his place and now urgently insisted that Schowalter should return, and he at length believed it his duty to yield to their entreaties. After the conference had thoroughly deliberated on this matter it was concluded that the school could not spare Schowalter, that the wish of his church could therefore not be granted. The communication of this delicate message to the church was entrusted to Chr. Krehbiel, who, after the session, went there in person and succeeded in arranging matters satisfactorily. But that the church might not be entirely disappointed it was so arranged that Schowalter should spend the summer vacation with his church, the school bearing the travelling expense, while one of the students was sent there to take charge of the instruction of the children. Thus for the present Schowalter remained connected with the school.

Upon request van der Smissen as professor of theology set before the Conference his ideal of what the school should strive to do, and enumerated the particular branches to be taught. He said he understood the purpose of the institution to be "to train young men to pious, humble, modest members of our denomination." He stated with emphasis that from the instruction all show—all that was simply display should be omitted, but that all diligence should be given to render the instruction simple and thorough. He declared in favor of a three years course in which instruction should be given in the following branches: Bible History, Exegesis, Mennonite Confession of faith, Church History, History of the Waldenses, Homiletics and Practical Theology.

Up to this time Schowalter had not only served as

teacher but the management of the whole household had also devolved upon him. At this session of conference it was thought wise to employ a steward who should have charge of the kitchen, dormitory, employment of the students during working hours and all other domestic business of the institution. L. O. Schimmel, one of the ministers of the "Swamp" Mennonite churches in Pennsylvania, was called to this position.

For some time the need of a new German hymnal had been felt, especially in the Pennsylvania churches. The hymnal then in use had gone out of print, which made it impossible to supply the increasing demand. Moreover that hymnal was not considered suitable to present conditions. The churches in the west were also repeatedly in need of additional supplies of hymnals. But the books used in the different sections were not the same. It was soon recognized that it would be of mutual advantage, if all churches would use the same hymnal, not only for business reasons, but also because the feeling of fellowship would thereby be strengthened and co-operation in worship would be improved. By and by the thought was proposed and gained in favor that the conference publish a hymnal suitable to the needs and views of the churches. This matter was brought before the conference, and it was resolved "that it be proposed to the several District Conferences east and west that they agree to the following plan: that the western brethren select and omit those hymns which they can spare from their hymnal, and the eastern brethren select those from their hymnal which they wish to retain; that these selections be sent to Professor van der Smissen, who with the assistance of a committee of three to be ap-

pointed for this purpose shall arrange these for a new hymnal; that Chr. Schowalter, A. B. Shelly, and Eph. Hunsberger shall constitute this committee; and finally that this resolution shall he submitted to the District Conferences for their approval." With this resolution the matter was allowed to rest for the present.

Finally also a resolution was adopted pertaining to the cause of union itself. It appears that at this time the idea of union had also been gaining some in favor among the so-called "old" Mennonites[1] of the north and west. Purposing to manifest their fraternal feeling toward these the conference made a friendly advance by instructing van der Smissen "to prepare a letter bearing on this subject and to send it to John and Daniel Brennemann with the request that it be submitted to the next council of the "old" Mennonites."

School work had not been discontinued during the time the Conference was in session. All visitors therefore had a good opportunity to see the institution and its workings for themselves. The impressions received were universally favorable. A few extracts from what was written on this subject may prove of interest. From A. B. Shelly we quote the following: "Even this, the first service we attended, made a very favorable impression on all. It is our opinion that any persons not blind

[1] By "old" Mennonites are meant those descendants of the early Mennonite settlers of Pennsylvania who still maintain a conservative, non-progressive attitude. For it was by way of distinction from the progressive movement started by J. H. Oberholzer that they came to apply the adjective "old" to themselves. In order to be consistent those, who no longer protest against such things as Oberholzer sought to introduce, but freely use these themselves, ought to drop that adjective and simply call themselves Mennonites.

to what is good would be convinced by attendance upon a single devotional exercise that the right spirit prevails in our institution. Today's service was especially impressive to me because on this occasion farewell was given by the theological professor to two students. The grave, yet kindly admonitions to those departing, the urgent appeal to all fellow students and friends to pray for them could not fail to touch those present very deeply. It is no exaggeration if we say that few remained unmoved—that few eyes were left dry. . . . After this service we enjoyed the privilege of attending upon some class-exercises. We were agreeably surprised to note the thoroughness of the work of the students and were thereby convinced of the thoroughness of the instruction." The visitors in leaving the institution carried with them the satisfaction of knowing this their common enterprise successfully engaged in the noble cause of education.

* * *

When churches, belonging to the General Conference, form organizations for the purpose of promoting local interests, such organizations are properly considered branches of the General Conference and therefore deserve mention in a history of the General Conference, in so far as their activity affects the general cause. To such an organization attention is here directed.

Rise of the Western District Conference.

It will be remembered by the reader that the immediate purpose of the meeting, held in Iowa in 1859, had been to arrange for carrying on home missionary work in that section of the country. On that occasion

some one had been detailed to attend to that work. In the years following that small and originally local movement had, however, gradually expanded into a far-reaching and general cause which no longer concerned itself with the local interests of any one section. Their own creation had grown too large for the section and could no longer be used by them to meet the special needs of their own locality. At first this situation was scarcely realized. By and by, however, when the local demands for assistance became more and more persistent, it dawned upon those interested, that the General Conference, their own child, could no longer serve their local interests. It was discovered that they must again form an organization through which to satisfy the demands arising in the locality.[1]

After the situation was once fully realized the matter soon came to a head. A conference of the western churches was called in 1868. The first session of the Western District Conference[2] began October 4, in Zion church, Iowa; the same church in which the First General Conference was held. As of some historic interest we quote the preamble to the minutes of that meeting:

"For several years past there was felt among us deep pity for, and sympathy with, the condition of many of our brethren in the north and west who have become isolated and are without the necessary spiritual care. Because of this feeling it has repeatedly been a question with us whether love did not require it of us to supply these brethren with at least some of the

[1] Christian Krehbiel first suggested such a conference and it was upon agitation by him that the first session was called.

[2] Later "Middle District."

crumbs from the tables of our organized churches and to encourage and edify them in their isolation.

"This matter had been brought under consideration here (Iowa) and found considerable support. In order, however, to be able to discharge this obligation, a conference was proposed of as many churches as would care to share in this work of love. Accordingly we extended an invitation to all churches known to us and situated within a certain distance."

Five churches responded to this invitation. Plainly the object was to form an organization through which to carry on home missionary work, for all resolutions adopted concerned themselves with this subject. Two home missionaries were chosen, Chr. Krehbiel of Summerfield, Ill., for the southwest, and John C. Krehbiel of West Point, Ia., for the northwest. They were to devote a portion of their time to this work and as compensation should receive two dollars per day and expenses paid. The spirit of sacrifice and action of these churches is remarkable. For at the very time when these few small churches undertook this additional work they were also the most liberal supporters of the conference school and the Javanese mission. They have furnished an example of self-denying service which is worthy of being studied and imitated in our day.

* * *

The second school year closed not long after the session of the Fifth Conference. Schowalter spent the vacation with his church in Iowa. Van der Smissen paid a visit to the churches in Canada with which he had carried on a correspondence while yet in Europe. The third school year opened in September. That the

institution was gaining in popularity is evidenced by the increased attendance ; but what was especially gratifying in this connection was that the eastern churches had a decidedly increased representation. During the first two years those churches had sent a total of only eleven students, but during the first month of the third year thirteen were enrolled from that section, and by the close of that year the number was increased to twenty. The other districts were also well represented so that the total enrollment for the year was forty-six. Most of these came from Mennonite families and had their lodging in the school dormitory ; this being crowded to the utmost. This state of affairs gave great satisfaction to the friends of the school. Of course those in charge were especially pleased, their pleasure being enhanced by the attendance of so large a number of youths of whom it could be expected that, after completion of their studies, they would devote their attainments to the benefit of the denomination. In this respect the institution was in a prosperous condition and its future apparently full of promise. How pleasant a task would it not be to be permitted to report equally satisfactory conditions in all phases of the school enterprise. Unfortunately this is not possible. On the contrary it must be reported that for many months a most unhappy state of affairs existed which gradually developed into a sort of chronic evil, and ultimately became one of the chief causes for the abandonment of the institution.

The state of affairs referred to is the more humilating because it existed between members of the faculty. The trouble had its origin in a misunderstanding between van der Smissen and Schowalter as to the authority and position given to van der Smissen in his call.

On this point an investigating committee, appointed at a later time, reported as follows: "The origin of these vexatious circumstances dates back to the time of the call of van der Smissen, in that the call, as composed in 1868, contains a contradiction to resolutions adopted at the conference of 1866. Said resolutions assign the highest authority (principalship) in the institution to the teacher of the German department. However Schowalter, who had accepted his position on the condition that the principalship should not devolve on him alone, had assigned the principalship to van der Smissen. This, it is true, was done with the approval of the supervisors, but in contradiction to the conference instructions."

In accordance with the stipulations made in his call van der Smissen expected at entrance upon his duties to step at the head of the institution and to conduct it according to his own ideas. Schowalter on the contrary expected to co-operate with van der Smissen, and that in a fraternal spirit they would manage the school together. Had both from the beginning been less self-assertive and more willing to forbear it is probable that all could have been amicably arranged. Unfortunately, however, the one adhered obstinately to the verbal terms of the call, claiming for himself undivided principalship, while the other was prohibited by the conference instructions from yielding his position. This brought on a conflict in which bitter feelings were aroused and very unpleasant scenes occured.

It was this lamentable conflict which had occasioned the demand for the earlier convening of the Fifth Conference in order that through it the difficulty might be removed. For the Conference alone had authority to

act in this matter, since the regulation binding Schowalter had been established by the Conference. The problem was not an easy one to solve. If van der Smissen insisted on the terms of the call given him, then no choice remained for the Conference. For van der Smissen could not be dismissed, the terms of his call guaranteeing support of himself and family while he lived. What the outcome would be therefore depended entirely on the attitude van der Smissen would take. Three possibilities were open: 1. Agree to the original arrangements of the Conference which assign the principalship to the German teacher. 2. Let van der Smissen have his way and give him the principalship. 3. Compromise. Van der Smissen chose to compromise, and with the approval of the Conference he made a written agreement with Schowalter, assigning to each a certain definite part of the management. The agreement was as follows:

"Specification of the work, rights and duties of the Theological and German teachers—agreed upon at the General Conference held May 31 to June 3, 1869.

1. They co-operate in fixing the daily program.

2. Both assist in entrance examinations.

3. Certificates and other credentials of students are in the custody of the second teacher (German); he also has charge of the enrollment.

4. Upon the first teacher (Theological) devolves the conduct of devotional exercises. He sees to it that order is observed in the dormitory.

5. Permission to leave the premises must be obtained from the first teacher.

6. The second teacher has charge of the books and treasury of the institution.

7. The care of the class rooms devolves upon the second teacher.

8. The second teacher has the care of the beds of the students.

"What is not expressly specified in the foregoing comes under the charge of the first teacher.

"To the above agreement the Conference gives her full consent."[1]

By this compromise a sort of division of work and duties had been effected which apparently removed the cause of conflict and friction. However this divided government could not and did not work as well as had been expected. For the carefully described limits of duties and rights could not prevent clashes and friction in the practical execution of the work.

Not only had the Conference succeeded in settling the cause of dispute by a compromise, but a reconciliation between these men had been effected which justly entitled to the hope that, after this, mutual forbearance would be exercised which would obviate all further discord. However with the unpleasant experiences still fresh in memory the divided government soon led to renewed friction. From the very beginning Schowalter had wished to end the difficulty by retiring, to which, however, the Conference had not consented. But now, when under the new arrangement the longed for peace could not be maintained, Schowalter resigned his position, and a successor having been secured in Jonas Y. Schultz,[2] he retired October, 1869, from the work in which he had labored for two years with signal blessing.

[1] Wadsworth Institution Record, No. IX. p. 118.

[2] Jonas Y. Schultz now lives at Quakertown, Pa. He edits a little paper called "Himmelsmanna."

Schultz had been only temporarily engaged until a suitable man could be found for the position. The committee believed to have found in him the very man to help the school to continued success and so prevailed upon him to accept the position permanently. The committee had not misjudged the man. To him the welfare of the institution was a matter of conscience. His heart was in the cause. He was in every way suited to the place. He possesed an appropriate education, so was qualified as instructor. At the same time he was of a kind and yielding disposition ; it was easy to get along with him. It is said of him that he frequently retired to the solitude of the neighboring woods in order that he might there pray undisturbed for the welfare of the school. As there had been no estrangement between him and the theological professor, and as each had certain specific duties to perform, it was hoped that thereafter all would go smoothly in the management. So far as could be observed from without this satisfactory condition did prevail and for several years the institution unfolded a richly blest activity. It was the flowering time of the school during which it attained its greatest glory.

The reader no doubt will enjoy a look into the daily life of the institution at this time. Fortunately a description of the routine of one day is given to us by van der Smissen himself. It is as follows :

"At five in the morning the bell sounds, and soon afterwards you may notice that the night is passed and day has come. The young people now wash, beds are made up and the study rooms are swept —this constitutes the first work. Every one goes to his studies as soon as possible ; for the time before morning devotionals must be utilized.

"Breakfast is served at half past seven. At eight recitations begin and continue until dinner is served at one o'clock. As the students file out of the room after dinner, the steward, L. O. Schimmel, awaits them with instructions in hand—for now the manual work begins. This is an excellent arrangement in our institution. All crowd about the steward, each curious as to what special work will be assigned to him. Nothing of dissatisfaction with this arrangement can be noticed on the students; they seem to enjoy it. Soon you may see them, according to the time of the year, in yard, garden or field busy at work. It is no simple matter, especially when the weather is bad and the house is as full as it was this winter, to find work for all; and still more difficult to assign work to each to suit his natural tastes. Nevertheless it works well, the appointment of a steward having greatly improved this part of the school.

"That the reader may be able to form some conception of what the daily assignments of work are, a list is here inserted:

1 person—stable work.
2 persons—peeling potatoes in kitchen.
2 persons—carry wood for supply of kitchen and rooms.
1 person—take wagon to blacksmith.
1 person—fasten wash line.
3 persons—work at carpentering.
2 persons—work at shoemaking.
2 persons—cut wood.
1 person—borrow saw in town.
1 person—get mail.
2 persons—take meat to Hunsberger to be smoked.
The rest cut wood.

"One person regularly milks the cow, two assist in setting the table and are free from other work.

"At three o'clock the bell calls the students from their work to class sessions; two occuring in the afternoon. From five to six is a study hour. At six supper is served. The time after supper is spent at studying until nine o'clock when evening devotion is held. Bed time comes at ten, and soon after that all the young people are in their bed-rooms.

"When the weather is favorable a short time of the day is usually spent at ball play or some other athletic exercise. While on the one hand diligent study is required, on the other hand opportunity for physical exercise is gladly given."

Of course at this time the school was popular with the churches, and its friends were constantly multiplying. Contributions flowed freely. Not only was money given but also supplies for kitchen and dormitory. For example the following credits are given for November, 1870: 16 bushels apples, one 16 lb. cheese, several barrels apple butter, 6 bushels turnips, 25 head cabbages, 2 squashes, 10 cans tomatoes, 1 package dried beans. People gave gladly, for they believed the school to be a means for advancing the Lord's cause. An illustration of the feelings with which the school was regarded is furnished in a letter by Jacob Hoch,[1] dated February 21, 1870. He says: "What then is the evidence, or where is the fruit of so many prayers offered by Mennonite brothers and sisters during many years for a reformation, for new, sanctified life in God in the Mennonite denomination? Behold! Yonder in Ohio—

[1] Member from Canada of sub-committee of supervisors.

there stands a house, built by God through the hands of men, contrary to all thought and expectation, in which there are teachers and students engaged daily in studying and practicing godliness to the blessing of the Mennonite church and also of the heathen. That is the fruit, that the blessing wrought by so much prayer. It is the Lord's doing and it is marvelous in our eyes."

With the students themselves the institution was popular, and to such as remained for an extended period of time it became as a home. This is clearly observable from occasional communications from students published in the Friedensbote. Ex-students bore away with them a fond attachment to the institution and it is remembered by many with tender gratitude to this day. Referring to this attachment one ex-student wrote as follows: "All have more or less definitely expressed the wish—I wish I might still remain in the institution!"

So far as the school work itself is concerned it was at this time very successfully carried on. Able teachers were sincerely endeavoring to train men for the church who should be spiritually alive and thoroughly educated. An unexpectedly large number of Mennonite youths were taking advantage of the opportunity offered. To the people the school was giving satisfaction. Had no other disturbing conditions existed a prosperous continuance would have been assured. But untoward conditions did exist.

The reader will remember that the building when dedicated had a considerable debt resting upon it. As the school did not begin until a year after its dedication no funds were required for conducting it. This therefore was the opportunity for freeing the institution from

debt. But nothing was done; no one seems to have realized the situation. The debt was not only not reduced but it actually increased through accumulating interest and necessary expenses. At the time of opening the school Schowalter reported a debt of 2050 dollars. Had a sufficiently large admission fee been charged to cover at least the greater part of the teachers' salaries this debt would easily have been wiped out in the course of a few years. However the charges to students were so low that they barely sufficed to pay for the students' board. Salaries of teachers and current expenses had therefore to be met by contributions from the churches, whether the students were few or many. The churches did not fail to contribute for this purpose and that right liberally. But there was no system in the whole matter. No one knew how much each particular church needed to give in order to meet the demands of the school. The giving being done at random the contributions failed to cover the annual deficit. So the debt increased from year to year until on January 1, 1871, it amounted to more than five thousand dollars. When this became known the friends of the institution began fo tremble for its safety.

When it was once fully realized that the situation was growing worse every year some began to cast about for a remedy. At one of her sessions the Eastern Conference decided to pay off 2200 dollars which had been borrowed in the east. This was very noble on their part, provided they intended to assist in liquidating the rest of the debt. But if they expected the other churches to cover the remainder—which was more than half the debt—the division would have been too unequal, for more

than half the conference churches then belonged to the Eastern District. As this proceedure was not general it did not bring relief; the debt remained. Various schemes for overcoming the difficulty were suggested. One was that thousand persons give each ten dollars annually and thus give prompt and permanent relief. But plausible as this plan seemed it was entirely impracticable. For the total membership of the Conference was not much over one thousand and of course many of these were children or persons without means. Daniel Baer of Summerfield, realizing this weakness in the scheme made the following reply to the proposition: "If the proposer only had the 998 contributors I would gladly take the last two places." Another scheme which aimed at a partial payment of the debt was more feasible in that it proposed that fifty persons should each give fifty dollars. The best plan, however, came from J. H. Oberholzer who as early as 1869 suggested the creating of a school fund. According to his scheme a large number of persons should pledge themselves to some sum of money, the amount being at the donor's option, on which they would pay five per cent. annually into the school treasury. The fund should be obtained through solicitation and the total fund was set for at least 15,000 dollars. It is true this total was not set high enough, as at five per cent. it would not have covered the annual deficit. Nevertheless the scheme was the correct one and if adopted would undoubtedly have given as satisfactory results as it does now in connection with Bethel College.

During the summer of 1870 the committee of supervisors, upon the suggestion of instructor Schultz, requested the sub-committee members to induce their

districts to take a general and systematic collection for debt payment. To this the Eastern Conference replied: "It is the sense of this Conference that on the whole it is better at the present time not to take any collection toward the cancellation of the debt." The answer of the Western Conference was: "Resolved, that we fully realize that the debt must be paid, and that we are willing according to ability to make efforts that it be paid." As might be expected these resolutions did not secure any improvement in this troublesome situation. However in some quarters energetic efforts began now to be made aiming at relief. In 1871 one of the Western churches (Summerfield) alone contributed one thousand dollars toward debt payment. From other places also came good sized donations. But such isolated efforts did not secure the desired result. The debt was not even reduced during that year. There was a lack of concerted action in this matter. The scattered forces needed to be combined that with one decisive action the evil might be removed, which as a festering sore was eating away the vitality of the institution. As long, however, as the old system was adhered to, even the cleaning up of the old debt would not have brought permanent relief. The source of indebtedness must be shut off and the school put on such a financial basis as to prevent an annual shortage. In failing to do this one of the mistakes of inexperience was made which in its effects proved fatal to this first and highly cherished undertaking.

When originally founded the school was planned exclusively for men. Not that the founders of the school in so doing consciously purposed to bar women from the privileges of the institution. The thought of a co-edu-

cational school never entered their minds. It was with them a matter-of-course that their school was for men only. They aimed to train missionaries, ministers and teachers, and such work, according to the bias of tradition, only men could do. Many of the founders had only recently come from Europe where the higher education of the sexes is carried on separately, so in founding their institution they simply followed what was customary in admitting men only.

Not many months after the opening of the school there already arose a demand for admission of women into the institution, and so give to them as well as to young men the benefits to be derived. As time went on this demand became more and more persistent. The desire for this privilege was particularly strong in the east where women had long ago been granted co-ordinate social position with men. This subject came to public discussion as early as 1868. The question of the education of women was very intelligently discussed in articles published in the Friedensbote. However opinions varied so greatly that the doors of the school still remained closed to women. On the one hand it was urged that just as education equips man for greater usefulness in life so too woman, if given the benefit of education, is more capable of discharging her duties successfully; in the home she will fill her place with more dignity and more acceptably to God; as an educator of her children she will be more apt and successful; and should she be called upon to serve as a missionary's wife she will be a far more valuable help to her husband and of greater service to the cause if possessed of a good education. On the other hand some of the opposition

still clung to the antiquated idea that all the education a woman needs is at most the ability to read and write ; others, though not opposed to education of women, held that education of men and women in the same institution was improper.

As stated, this discussion brought no change. As before only men were admitted. For two years the question was agitated in private only, but was constantly gaining supporters. In 1870 it was again brought to general attention through an article by J. G. Stauffer. From this article we quote the following extract: "Suppose our daughters should receive more christian education what would be the effect? Very likely, upon becoming mothers, they would apply themselves to better advantage in giving their children christian training. Who loves the children more than mother? Who has an earlier chance to instruct them than mother? . . . I rise to champion the cause of woman—the weaker sex. They too should have the privilege of receiving instruction in our school. How have not the sisters in our denomination labored in behalf of the institution in furnishing beds and other things! Work they may but not enjoy. . . ."

About this time J. H. Oberholzer also exerted his influence in favor of co-education. He addressed a writing to the supervisors in which he says "that he can see no contradiction to the real spirit and purpose of the institution if women be permitted to attend the classes, even though the constitution be entirely silent on the question of instruction of women." His plan was that women attend the class sessions but have their lodging elsewhere than in the institution. Oberholzer's suggestion was considered in the regular session of the

committee and the following resolution was adopted: "This committee appreciates the full importance of this matter and therefore requests the members of the sub-committee to bring it up for consideration in the coming sessions of the district conferences and to report the results."

As a result of this request a general and very lively discussion on the proposition to admit women to the class sessions arose. It appears that a majority favored such an arrangement, that there was, however, a stubborn minority who vehemently protested. As already stated the strongest support came from the east, so the matter could be easily disposed of at their conference. Their resolution was "that if in the judgement of the committee and faculty it seems practical to admit women to the classes then such admittance is sanctioned by this conference." The commendable purpose evidently was to open the school to women. But in passing we note that the resolution contained a feature which might become dangerous to the General Conference in that her authority in this matter was entirely ignored. The answer of the Western Conference was that "it is the sense of this conference that it is not within the province of district conferences to give instructions with regard to admission of women into the institution, as the disposition of such fundamental matters rests exclusively with the General Conference. However this conference recognizes that a school for women is desirable. We purpose, therefore, first of all to wipe out the debt resting on the school, after which we shall be ready to undertake the establishment of a girl's school." While not opposed to the education of women, the western churches were evidently not ready to make the concession to the east of admitting

girls to the classes of the present institution. About this time opposition was manifested by occupants of the institution. Mrs. van der Smissen, the professor's wife, made a reply through the Friedensbote to Stauffer's article. She endeavored to show that the proposed arrangement would not be accompanied by desirable results nor "would it bring any blessings to the denomination or the institution." No agreement could be reached on this question, hence no change was made; only men were admitted. Women, if they would secure higher education, must procure it elsewhere.

* * *

The preparation of a new hymnal, it will be remembered, had been delegated by the General Conference to the district conferences and a co-operating special committee. The Eastern Conference first took up the matter. In their fall session of 1869 the plan of the General Conference was approved, and a committee was instructed "to select from the hymnal now in use the hymns to be incorporated in the new hymnal." At the next session (1870) this committee reported that two hundred hymns had been selected, of which, however, about one hundred were also contained in the hymnal of the Western churches; that this selection had been forwarded to the Western brethren and that the action of the west was now being awaited.

The Western Conference did nothing in the matter until the fall of 1870. These churches had in use a hymnal published by the Mennonite churches of South Germany[1] with which they were very well satisfied.

[1] The churches of Baden and the Palatinate had co-operated in the publication of a hymnal. A committee assisted by the

They were not at all disposed to give it up on the chance of having it replaced by something inferior. After having seriously considered the matter they adopted the following resolution :

"With respect to the proposed new hymnal we feel ourselves prompted in fraternal affection to submit to you, our eastern brethren, for your consideration, the following result of our deliberation : It is our aim and purpose, dear brethren, to strengthen the bond of union among those of our faith whether they be near or far, in this country or Europe. We therefore desire to evade everything that even by appearances might tend to weaken this bond of love. For, dear brethren, you no doubt are aware that by this hymnal the bond of fellowship is already established between us and many European brethren.

"Further we desire to submit to your thoughtful consideration that our hymnal is of such a high standard that it is not at all probable that we ourselves would succeed in replacing it by another which could constitute a treasure so suitable to home and public service, and which would offer so well for heart and life what we need as does this one.

"We also desire in all kindness to propose for your prayerful consideration and self-examination, dear brethren, whether over-fondness for your own hymns has not prompted you to select so large a number as you have sent us for incorporation in the new hymnal ;—for we presume that what has been said above is clear to you and that you concede the correctness thereof.

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hymnologist Albert Knapp succeeded after laboring for four years in producing an excellent hymnal containing six hundred spiritual hymns. It was published about 1856.

"Finally, brethren, we are very willing to accept from you your most valued hymns, and wish to suggest that in your selection you remember particularly the needs of the unification cause, as also of Feet-Washing and Non-Resistance. And in this connection we suggest to you whether it would not be suitable to secure the new hymnal by adding a supplement (to our hymnal), supplied entirely by yourselves. In conclusion we would most affectionately, yet urgently request you to reconsider this matter of a new hymnal."

At first the attitude of the western churches gave no offense. With the better informed the idea of a supplement met with approval. Among these were A. B. Shelly and J. S. Moyer. The latter made a comparison between the hymnals now in use and pointed out the advantages and superiority of that of the west. One of the advantages he enumerated was that the western hymnal "has also the melodies, 141 in number, for all hymns in the book." But to the Eastern Conference, in session in the spring of 1871, the proposition from the west did not prove acceptable. A few indeed supported it, but the majority hesitated. The matter was therefore postponed and the ministers were instructed to bring the subject up for consideration in their respective churches. At the fall session the matter again came before the conference and the proposition of the west was now accepted. A committee of three, consisting of A. B. Shelly, Joseph Schantz and Christian Clemmer, was instructed to make the selection of hymns and arrange them for the supplement; the rest of the work being left to the committee of the General Conference.

At this stage the matter halted once more; for the

wishes as to the size of the book and the arrangement of the contents diverged so greatly that the committee in charge thought it best not to proceed. In the west the wish now was to retain their portion of the book unaltered. The brethren of the east wanted to make some changes. They had finally consented to let those of the west retain their book while they would add a supplement. However the western hymnal was inconveniently large. The hymns were divided only into stanzas, the verses not constituting separate lines. The eastern churches desired to publish the hymnal in a pocket size and to have the verses set in separate lines. But both these changes were stiffly opposed ; the western churches wanted to retain their book unchanged. They therefore proposed that "for the present not the whole hymnal but only the supplement be printed (in America) but that the rest of the book be obtained from Europe already printed, but unbound." In short, the western churches insisted that their book be left unchanged, without having proper regard for the wishes of their sister churches. Leading persons in the east even now counseled, for the sake of peace and unity, to surrender their own wishes and accept the plan made by the western churches. However the forbearance of long-suffering persons can come to an end. There was danger that this matter would develop into an estrangement between the Eastern and Western districts. The temper which prevailed in the east may be discovered from an article which appeared anonymously in the Friedensbote and of which the following is an extract :

"Those of the east were, and for the most part still are, in favor of a new hymnal composed of the choicest

hymns from the European and Pennsylvanian Mennonite books, as also from hymnals of other denominations. This book ought to be published as a pocket edition and with the verse in separate lines.

"The European brethren seem to be very decidedly in favor of retaining their book just as it is; and support this position with the good argument that the European hymnal has been stereotyped and can therefore be obtained cheaper in Europe than if printed here.

"The present writer is of the opinion that, as the Mennonites of Pennsylvania admittedly are of a more yielding disposition than are those from Europe, the former should adopt the book of the latter just as it is without a supplement. For this supplement, composed of hymns from the eastern hymnal, would very likely not suit the European brethren, and they would grant it simply to please us. Besides the supplement would be expensive and would withal give the volume an unshapely appearance.

"But if the eastern brethren are not disposed to enter upon the last named plan, then let them return to their original plan and, regardless of the European brethren, produce a hymnal suitable to their own taste and wish."

There was in the east a growing feeling that the west had not dealt with them in a fraternal spirit in this matter. As the setting of the verse in separate lines would not change the contents, it was thought that "as in all other respects the wishes of the dear western churches had been submitted to, that now they should not compel the eastern churches to sacrifice their reasonable wish to the simple preference of those of the west." Fortu-

nately, however, feelings were held in check on both sides and nothing rash was done tending to dissolve fellowship. Both district conferences referred this matter back to the General Conference accompanied by statements that they would be satisfied with what that body would see fit to do. At its session of 1872 the General Conference decided to publish the hymnal with the supplement, in a smaller size ; with the verse set in separate lines ; and to have the printing done in America.

* * *

In the year 1856 the Mennonite Printing Union had undertaken the publication of the Friedensbote (or Christliche Volksblatt as it was then called), and had continued in this work until 1871, when it became necessary to make some changes. This work had not been undertaken for financial gain and it never did have any gains to record. On the contrary it was one prolonged struggle to make the receipts cover the expenses. As not even enough was made to replace the wear and tear in the printing outfit, the time finally came when everything was so run down that, in order to continue, a new equipment must be secured. But there was not enough money in the treasury with which to do this ; in fact during the fifteen years since the organization of the company many of the shareholders had died, so that there was little prospect of securing the necessary funds from the company itself. For this and other reasons it was deemed prudent to reorganize or to make a change some other way. One way would have been to organize a new company similar to the existing one. As, however, the purpose was to serve not private but denominational in-

terests it seemed proper that the paper should be conducted as a common and not a private undertaking ; the thought originally being to transfer the paper to the control of the General Conference.

A meeting of the shareholders was called September 30, 1871, to consider the situation and adopt a course to be followed in the future. The result of that meeting was that the printing establishment was sold to John G. Stauffer, and a proposition was made to the Eastern Conference to assume the control of and responsibility for the Friedensbote and continue its publication. This offer was accepted by the conference. The management of the enterprise was placed in charge of a publication committee, composed of five persons, to serve for periods of three years. The first members of this committee were John Funk, John O. Schimmel, David Wasser, Aaron S. Mayer and Wm. G. Mayer. The editor's term of service was also for three years and the Conference itself elected this official. As A. B. Shelly had served to the best of satisfaction and with good success in this important capacity the conference continued him in his position. The name and size of the paper remained unchanged. Under the new management the Friedensbote made its first appearance on January 1, 1872, and with renewed vigor continued its useful activity.

* * *

Let us now retrace our steps to the school. In the year 1871 the question arose whether it would not be well to have the school incorporated. The occasion for this was a bequest which had been made to the institution which, however, could not legally be received by

the school unless incorporated. The supervisors took the matter under advice and decided for incorporation. All the members of the sub-committee also gave their approval, excepting Daniel Baer, the western member. Ha advised not to proceed in the matter until it be fully ascertained that such an action would in no wise be to the disadvantage of the institution. Soon after that the supervisors took steps for the legal incorporation. In this they, however, exceeded the authority vested in them by the Conference. And if they had not exceeded their authority it would have been prudent to leave the direction of so important a matter to the Conference. For regulations had to be adopted for the management of the business of the institution, the naming of which very properly belonged to the Conferemce. The school was common property and as such the proposed incorporation should have been brought to general attention through the Friedensbote. But this too was neglected, the committee proceeding as if it were simply a private affair of their own ; a weakness altogether too common with committees who represent church interests. When the matter had progressed thus far it came to the knowledge of Chr. Krehbiel and he promptly brought proceedings to a halt, by publishing the whole matter and showing that such unwarranted action by the committee encroached upon the authority of the Conference. Upon this the committee gave an account in the Friedensbote of their plans and action and produced reasons why they thought the incorporation should be effected. A legal appraisement of the school property (Total $17,928.00) had already been made. The Articles of Incorporation with necessary rules for its business management had

also been prepared. The proceedings having now been interrupted nothing further was done until the Conference met in 1872. That body after due deliberation gave instructions as to what should be done, whereupon the incorporation was effected in December, 1872.

The close of the school for the year 1870—1871 marks a climax in its history. For in that year the first fruit was matured—the first class was graduated. Five young men had completed the three years' theological course and were graduated on June 22, 1871. These were Samuel F. Sprunger,[1] John S. Hirschler,[2] S. S. Haury,[3] William Galle[4] and Jacob S. Moyer.[5] With just pride the architect views the finished structure which under his masterly superintendence has, piece after piece, gradually developed out of a mass of unrelated material into its present stateliness, unity and usefulness. But more justly the faithful teacher's heart swells with joy as he beholds the spiritual structure which has been built up under his direction in the successful graduate ; and to this the instructors of the Mennonite school were no exception. It was to them no small satisfaction, as this class of five completed their course, to be permitted to present them as the first graduates of the institution. But not only was this an occasion of rejoicing for the school, it was a triumph for the unification movement. Only eleven years ago few had dared to entertain the hope that co-operation among Mennonites would ever be

[1] See Biographical Appendix.
[2] Now Home Missionary for the Western District Conference.
[3] Practices Medicine at Newton, Kansas.
[4] Pastor of the Zion Church at Moundridge, Kansas.
[5] See Biographical Appendix.

secured. And now not only was a successful union in existence, but already the ranks were being re-enforced by trained young men, sent forth by an institution owned and controlled by this union. It is true it had cost much self-denying labor and many sacrifices to establish and maintain the institution. But it was now seen and felt that these efforts had not been in vain. The institution had already become a manifest blessing to the whole denomination in that by it the number of spiritual laborers was increased; for all the members of the class had consecrated themselves to the service of the Gospel.

That, however, over which the greatest satisfaction was felt, was the fact that Samuel S. Haury, one of this class, had not only given himself to the ministry of the Gospel, but had dedicated himself to missionary service among the heathen. Nothing could have better answered the prayers and hopes of the promoters of this whole cause. For it was as a means to the advancement of the missionary cause that the need of a school was at first felt. The institution had therefore fulfilled the highest expectations; it had matured the fruit most ardently desired; it had produced the best it could so far as kind was concerned.

Good begets good. Not only had excellent fruit been matured, but this result in turn was destined by reaction to be stimulating and spiritually invigorating. The fruit had to be cared for. The missionary born into the lap of the church made demands. With increased blessings obligations multiplied. New duties arose. A great and needy field for christian activity opened itself. By the providence of God the school became the means for opening to the Mennonites of America the way to the

most noble, beautiful and extensive enterprise so far undertaken by them—namely the proclamation of the Gospel to the heathen. This fruitage alone forever marks the school as a successful undertaking and worthy of a prominent place among the influences which shaped the history of the Mennonite denomination.

Steps had been taken by the Conference in 1866 for undertaking missionary work. But no particular work had been assigned to the committee then elected; nor did this committee work up the cause and do something to open the way for activity. In 1869 the troubles within the school had so completely overshadowed all else that nothing was done with regard to mission; that phase of the work seemed to have been entirely forgotten. However when it became known that one of the students of the school felt himself called to enter the missionary service, interest in the cause awakened with redoubled vigor. This new situation took the idea of mission out of the realm of the ideal and made it real—brought it closer home to the people. For was there not now prospect that one of their own number would be sent to the field who would depend upon them for support! Expectations even rose higher than this. The question immediately arose whether the General Conference should not begin an independent mission of their own with Haury as missionary. This idea received a very substantial support through the fact that as far back as 1866 Jacob and Mary Leisy of Summerfield, Ills., had donated one thousand dollars to the General Conference, with the provision that this money be put on interest until the General Conference should begin an independent Mission, when it might be used in support of that enterprise.

From the beginning the aim of the Conference had been to open up and conduct a missionary enterprise of its own. This purpose had become more firmly established in the progress of time. With the announcement of Haury's intention the time seemed to have arrived for action.

It was of course not expected that this work would be begun at once, as Haury was not ready to enter the field. He had as yet to spend several years in preparing for this special work, but it was universally expected that after that he would enter the mission field as the representative of the American churches. How great, therefore, was the disappointment when it became known that Haury had already applied for admission to another missionary society. If Haury should really enter the service of another society, then all the new and cherished hopes of the conference churches would be utterly shattered.

The association with which Haury had applied was the Mennonite Missionary Society of Amsterdam, Holland. His application to this society was due to van der Smissen who suggested it and encouraged Haury to take this step, even before it came to the knowledge of the churches that Haury had dedicated himself to missionary service. This action was directly contrary to the conference instructions of 1866, and these certainly should have been regarded in this matter. When van der Smissen's attention was directed to these instructions, he justified his action by referring to his call. For this subject is touched in that document in the following language: "First of all you desire information as to what is expected of the theological professor. Parallel

with the aim to train teachers in the institution there is another, namely that of imparting to the students the indispensable theological knowledge ; and, should one or the other desire to become a missionary, to give to such person a course of instruction, as would fit him to enter the missionary society of Holland and prepare himself for mission work there." Van der Smissen further explained that as both the conference instructions of 1866 and the call had been written by Chr. Schowalter, it could never be supposed "that he (Schowalter) had not comprehended the sense of the instructions and written the very opposite in the call from what had been agreed upon and been intended."

Schowalter's reply to this was, that the part of the call referred to really set forth what had found expression at the Conference, but had not been recorded at the time ; that he therefore had written more into the call than he should have. He denied, however, that van der Smissen had correctly interpreted what had been written. For what was said in the call was intended to indicate only the kind and degree of information which should be imparted, and not to delegate to van der Smissen the authority of sending missionary candidates to Holland without consulting the Conference.

Haury had applied with the Amsterdam Society in February, 1871. In May he received favorable reply. They were ready to accept him and recommended additional preparation, preferably at Barmen, Germany. But before entering upon any binding arrangements they desired to know whether his parents or his home church would not provide the means for his further education. At the same they asked for security against possible loss

in case he should change his mind with regard to becoming a missionary.

Not long after Haury had written to Amsterdam he also informed his home church (Summerfield) of his purpose to become a missionary, and that he had offered himself to the Amsterdam society. His purpose to become a missionary was cause for great satisfaction, they "saw in it an answer to prayer." With regard to the proposal to Amsterdam they say, "we cannot be pleased, because thereby the wish of the General Conference has been ignored, which we feel in duty bound to regard." They communicated their feelings and wishes in regard to this matter to Haury. The actions of the church in this matter naturally were inspired by its minister, Chr. Krehbiel. When afterwards reply came from Amsterdam Haury sent a copy to the Summerfield church. The church replied that it could not obligate itself, as suggested by the Amsterdam society, without the co-operation of the affiliating churches of the General Conference. At that time they also requested Haury to spend his vacation at home with the church, to which he readily consented.

Accordingly Haury returned to Summerfield after graduation. He being present, several church meetings were held in which Haury's future course as also the interest of the General Conference were fully considered. It was there decided that Haury should write up a statement of his purpose of becoming a missionary and of his wishes with regard to the matter, and then publish it in the Friedensbote. At the same time the officers of the church should prepare another writing containing a full statement of the present situation and setting forth plans

as to what might be done. Both writings appeared in the Friedensbote in August, 1871. At the close of his article Haury expressed the wish to be permitted to continue his studies at Barmen without having taken final action with regard to his relation to either the Amsterdam society or the General Conference. Finally he appealed to the Mennonite churches of America to assist him in securing "further training for the sacred missionary service." In the article from the Summerfield church the whole matter was first clearly set forth, and then the proposition was made that Haury should not ally himself with any missionary society before completing his studies. That in the meantime he was to bear in mind that the American churches, with which he stood in closest relation, had the first and greatest duties toward him and the prospective work. After the completion of his preparation he should then "if possible with the approval of the General Conference go to the missionfield to which the Lord might direct him, wherever that be, and whether under the General Conference in co-operation with the Amsterdam society or under the Conference alone." Attention was also directed to the fact that, in case Haury should decide to pursue his further studies as the prospective missionary of the General Conference, the mission committee would be authorized to supply Haury with the necessary funds. The request was also made that all churches soon express themselves through the Friedensbote with regard to this matter, and that if no objections were raised it should be considered as acceptable to all that the committee, together with the conference officers and van der Smissen, in behalf of the Conference undertake the support of Haury in his further preparation.

The whole situation being thus brought to general notice, it soon became manifest that there existed a deep-seated purpose to carry on independent mission work through the Conference; that there was a readiness to provide the necessary funds for this purpose; and that all were jealously opposed to any procedure which could injure the Conference through disregard of its instructions. Within a few days after the publication of the communication from Summerfield the "Pennsylvania Mission Board" (auxiliary of the Eastern Conference) held a session to consider this matter. They expressed their pleasure at Haury's resolution to become a missionary, but disapproved of his allying himself with another society; because, said they, "it is clear from a resolution of the Conference of 1866 that this organization intends to carry on mission work independently, and so we are unwilling to withdraw our support from it." They appropriated two hundred dollars toward Haury's support at school, provided he place himself under the auspices of the General Conference. Iowa was also soon heard from with resolutions urging greater faithfulness to conference instructions and aims, but also promising support to Haury in the further prosecution of his studies. Encouraged by these expressions and assured of support on the part of the American Mennonite churches, Haury decided to act upon the Summerfield plan and continue his preparation for the work. Accordingly he left in September, 1871, for Europe, there to attend the school at Barmen, Germany. With this the mission enterprise had to rest until the Conference would meet in 1872 and adopt resolutions for the future.

About this time a very buoyant, hopeful spirit pre-

vailed throughout the conference churches. Indeed now and then threatening clouds had arisen, but they had always blown over without breaking into a storm. Friction which had occassionally existed had been removed by the application of the oil of love. Never before had such blessings been enjoyed by Mennonites in America as now came to them through school and fellowship. Under these conditions it was but natural that there was a universal feeling that the Conference was moving on toward a very bright and happy future. These feelings were voiced in an article by John G. Stauffer, entitled: "The Promising Future of the Mennonites of America." The following extract of this article will be read with pleasure.

"More than one hundred and fifty years have elapsed since this denomination was transplanted to this country, into all parts of which it has now spread, and in some places it has sent its roots down deep, even as a mighty tree. What constitutes the most pleasing sign of the times to which I wish to call attention, is, that this tree is now in full blossom and is even now beginning to mature some fruit, which gives reason for confidence and faith in the future of the Mennonite church in America.

"This church now has two printing establishments, which are effective means for the dissemination of truth. . . . It also has an educational institution for young men which is in charge of very sincere, christian men. From this institution have already gone forth very active and useful young men, full of the spirit of Christ. Others are in course of training and promise well. One is even now at work preparing himself to go as the first German-American Mennonite missionary to

preach the Gospel to the heathen. Assuredly these signs of life entitle to the joyful hope that the Mennonite church has a future. But how much grander still will it be when the evangelists of our church, anointed with the Holy Spirit, shall in great numbers labor in this and in heathen lands and everywhere establish churches ; a hope, the realization of which is perhaps not far distant."

That such brilliant hopes were entertained need not surprise us when we remember how rapidly the unification movement had developed, how success after success had been achieved, how the capability and activity of the Conference had surpassed all expectation, causing the astonished witnesses to exclaim : "This is the Lord's doing."

Not at all times did circumstances warrant such buoyancy. In its career the Conference had now reached a climax of success. But as the traveller must pass from the hill-top to the valley, so for the Conference there came after this season of triumph a period of bitter humiliation.

CHAPTER VIII.

School—its further course. Sixth Conference. Mennonite Immigration. Foreign Mission. Home Mission. Seventh Conference.

Though the school had closed under such satisfying conditions, the succeeding year (1871—2) could not be begun without disturbing changes. These changes occurred among the teachers, of whom two retired during the summer of 1871. One of those retiring was Schultz. Once before he had handed in his resignation, pleading ill health and that the debt of the institution was an unbearable burden to him. It will be remembered that upon him as German teacher devolved the care of the accounts of the institution. His sensitive nature could not endure the annoyance arising from constant shortage of funds. His honest soul contemplated with dread the possibility of a financial insolvency. He wanted the debt removed and did all in his power to accomplish that end, but instead of succeeding in this he saw this harrassing debt growing larger and larger until he felt he must withdraw. At his first resignation the supervising committee had so urgently plead with him not to deprive the institution of his services that he finally yielded. However the following year brought no improvement in the financial embarrassment, and as in

addition to that vexation the double system of management of the school brought experiences, which were exceedingly painful to him, he concluded to retire, and accordingly vacated his position in the Spring of 1871. The retirement of this pious, modest but capable man was a great loss to the institution. M. S. Moyer,[1] a young man from Pennsylvania and for a time a student in the school, was called to fill the vacancy. He entered upon his duties in August of 1871.

Soon after Moyer's entrance Fritz, who had served as English teacher since the opening of the school, suddenly and unexpectedly vacated his position. It was necessary promptly to fill his place. As Moyer was able to serve also as English teacher, and had originally been intended by the supervisors for that place, he was assigned to that department. To the German department Daniel F. Risser of Summerfield was called, and he entered upon this work in December, 1871.

As both the new teachers were members of the Mennonite church, it was now for the first time that the school had a faculty of Mennonites only. This was felt as a cause for congratulation among supporting churches, and that particularly because two of the teachers were of their own number, Moyer from the east and Risser from the west.

At the outset all went very nicely and in good harmony as very properly it should when "brethren of peace" co-operate. How cordial the relations between the occupants of the institution were at this time is evident from a report of a Sunday school christmas cele-

[1] See Biographical Appendix.

bration held in the institution in 1871. Instructors and students participated in the best of harmony. All assisted in trimming the tree. The three teachers lit the candles. Students made speeches and sang beautiful hymns. Sunday school scholars recited Scripture passages and other selections. It was indeed a pleasant occasion for the participants; in the history of the institution it stands as a bright example of the spirit which should always have prevailed, but rarely did.

The attendance was not as large as desired or even as it had been before. At the close of the year 1871 the total attendance was but 28, of whom 21 however had their home in the institution. Among these students were representatives from all the states in which there were conference churches, viz: Ohio, Pennsylvania, Indiana, Iowa, and Illinois. Considerable effort was made to increase the attendance, the matter being agitated from the school as well as by the churches themselves, but the desired result was not obtained. Evidently there was still lacking with many a full appreciation of the advantage of a more than common education, and as long as that was wanting a very full attendance upon the school could not be expected.

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With the year 1872, the time for the regular triennial session of the General Conference had arrived. Accordingly the Sixth General Conference met on October 28 of that year at Wadsworth, Ohio.

Again the Conference experienced an increase. From seventeen the number of participating churches had advanced to twenty-three. Nearly all of these

twenty-three churches were small ; their total number of votes aggregating but sixty—a gain of eight votes over the last session. Most of the churches which united at this time were situated in Pennsylvania, one (Munsterberg later Berne) was in Indiana. Below is given a list of the churches with their representatives and votes.

Church.	*Place.*	*Delegates.*	*Votes.*
1. Waterloo	Canada	J. Huber	3
2. Summerfield	Illinois	C. Krehbiel, J. Leisy, J. Vogt, D. Hirschler, D. Baer, J. Haury	5
3. Munsterberg (Berne)	Indiana	S. F. Sprunger	1
4. Salem	Dayton, Ia.	Wm. Galle	2
5. Zion	Donnellson, Ia.	Chr. Schowalter, Jac. Krebill	5
6. Franklin	Iowa	J. S. Hirschler	2
7. West Point	"	J. C. Krehbiel, J. Risser	2
8. Ashland	Ohio	John Risser	1
9. Cleveland	"	Daniel Krehbiel	1
10. Wadsworth	"	E. Hunsberger, J. Neisz, J. Jodes	3
11. Bartolets	Pennsylvania	G. H. Gottschall	4
12. Schwenksville	"		
13. Bedminster	"	Wm. G. Moyer	3
14. Baumansville	"		
15. East Swamp	"	A. B. Shelly	10
16. West Swamp	"	J. H. Oberholzer	
17. Flatland	"		
18. Boyertown	"	Abr. Gottschall	1
19. Hereford	"	Chr. Clemmer	5
20. Philadelphia	"	L. O. Schimmel	3
21. Saucona	"	W. H. Oberholzer	2
22. Springfield	"	J. S. Moyer	4
23. Upper Milford	"	Jos. Schantz	3
		Total Votes	60

List of churches represented at Sixth General Conference. Held at Wadsworth, Ohio. 1872.

The election of officers, occurring then at the beginning of the sessions, brought on a change which deserves notice. Up to this time J. H. Oberholzer, who had done so much toward originating the Conference, had served as chairman of the organization. Because of his advanced age he now desired to be relieved of this responsibility. When such zealous and successful leaders retire from activity, we regret to see them go, and we call to remembrance with gratitude what they have done for us. As for himself he could retire with a satisfied heart. Many years had he labored unselfishly in the Lord's service, but now in his old age it was his privilege to see the beautiful fruit of his labors. He was present at this session and presided at the opening, but as soon as his successor was elected he vacated his chair.

In the selection of a new chairman the Conference was very fortunate. The choice fell on A. B. Shelly, editor of the Friedensbote, who was well known as an intelligent, clear-sighted man, honestly seeking to promote the best interests of the cause. He was well qualified for the office tendered him, as he possessed a calm temper and would not allow himself to be drawn into any rash act. His sincere purpose at all times was to treat every one with full fairness and considerateness under the existing rules. For twenty-four years he filled this important position to the entire satisfaction of all.

The first subject for consideration presented by the business committee was Home Mission, that is, evangelistic work among Mennonite churches. After due deliberation it was resolved to undertake this kind of work. Accordingly three persons were appointed to this duty. For the east L. O. Schimmel was chosen, for the central

district E. Hunsberger, and for the west Chr. Krehbiel. They were instructed to devote a portion of their time to this work according to needs and circumstances, in compensation for which the Conference promised them two dollars per day and payment of travelling expenses.

The reports from the school were not at all encouraging. On the one hand a decrease in the attendance during the year from twenty-six to twenty had occurred, and on the other hand the debt, despite the efforts made to wipe it out, still amounted to almost four thousand dollars. Nevertheless the supporters of the cause were not disheartened, but endeavored to find ways and means to let them out of the difficulty and to set the school upon a solid basis. In order to rid the school of the harassing debt, it was resolved, 1. That the Conference urgently requests that every church appoint out of their own number a solicitor of funds for the liquidation of the debt; and 2. That a separate account be kept of the debt and that it be not confused with the current expense account.

The system of management of the institution was altered somewhat at this time. The division into a local committee of supervisors and a sub-committee of persons from the several districts was retained. It was, however, desired that the sub-committee should be more intimately connected with the management of current affairs. The following plan was therefore adopted:

"The committee of supervisors order and dispose of all such matters as will bear of no postponement; provided, however, that matters which are of interest to the Conference be reported monthly to each member of the sub-committee. Matters of great importance which

can bear postponement for at least two weeks shall first be reported to the sub-committee members and their opinion obtained, whereupon the supervisors shall take action in accordance with their conscientious conviction. Members of the sub-committee shall always be entitled to express to the supervisors their approval or disapproval of matters appearing in the monthly reports." As desirable and feasible as this arrangement appears in theory, it nevertheless became the cause in practical operation of serious friction and misunderstanding.

The following persons were chosen to the management of the school interests: Committee of supervisors, Hiram H. Drake (President), Harrison Thomas, Anthony Overholt; Sub-committee, S. B. Baumann for Canada, W. H. Oberholzer for Pennsylvania, Jacob Krehbiel III. for the West.

That interest in Foreign Mission had been thoroughly awakened was very manifest at this session. Steps were now taken to begin the work in earnest. A new Mission Board was elected, now of five persons. Those elected were C. J. van der Smissen, J. H. Oberholzer, Chr. Krehbiel. The officers of the Conference, A. B. Shelly and Chr. Schowalter, were members by virtue of their office.

As stated before Haury, through van der Smissen's instrumentality, had begun a correspondence with the Amsterdam Mennonite Mission Society with regard to entering their service. On the part of that society it was of course desired that American contributions might flow into their treasury as heretofore. Accordingly they offered Haury a position as missionary to Summatra, there to be associated with Henry Dirks. This friendly

approach the Conference did not wish to pass by unnoticed. It was decided, therefore, to propose that the Conference as an organization enter into co-operation with the Amsterdam society on a basis of equality; according to which the Conference would send her own missionary to Summatra, there to labor in conjunction with missionary Dirks, but to be accountable only to the Conference, the Conference also being entirely responsible for his support.

It was further ordered that in case nothing should come of these negotiations with the Amsterdam brethren that "then the Mission Board is authorized and instructed to take such steps as the Lord shall point out to them for the opening of an independent mission."

Upon the request of the Mission Board the Conference agreed to consider Haury as their prospective missionary and therefore to bear his expenses while pursuing his course of preparation, but without insisting that he at this time pledge himself to the service of the Conference, yet with the expectation that he do so as soon as the proper time for this should arrive.

As it was expected that others would offer themselves for missionary service it was resolved "that every young man that proposes to become a missionary shall present to any member of the Board a written application, including also a statement how he came by his purpose; and that every missionary candidate must be at least eighteen years old."

By these resolutions the way was opened by which the Mennonites of America, under the gracious guidance of God, entered into active labor on the mission field. Though unforeseen, the performance of this sacred duty

has by reaction become a great blessing to the Conference itself. Until now the school, as common possession and undertaking, had been the means to hold the various elements in co-operation and to cement them in closer fellowship. But repeated difficulties, within and concerning the institution, had now so weakened the power of the school in this respect, that it no longer centered general interest upon itself, wherefore something new was needed which would enlist the interest and support of all. This the work of foreign mission happily did. So, while the Conference sought to do good to others in the mission enterprise, it unwittingly brought a blessing upon itself.

Mennonite Immigration.

During the decade following 1870, an extensive Mennonite immigration occurred. Notice is taken in this work of that important event because of the intimate relation in which the General Conference has stood with that movement, and because the history of the Conference has to some extent been shaped through the new conditions arising from the settlements then made in this country.

After the close of the Civil War the United States experienced a mighty industrial growth and development. Among other things it was at that time that the great, fertile plains of the west were made accessible to settlement; in consequence of which a great wave of emigration moved westward. Among those Mennonites already settled in this country the desire to move westward also took hold, prompted largely by the circumstance that the increased posterity found it difficult to secure a livli-

hood. As experience had taught that independent removals of single families so scattered the emigrants that new churches could not be organized to offer them spiritual homes, the idea was originated to colonize the immigrants in communities of sufficient strength to form churches.

This plan was first discussed among the churches of the Western District Conference; its originator and chief promoter being Chr. Krehbiel, pastor of the Summerfield church, who, as we shall see, played a leading part in the whole migratory movement. In a private way this idea had been under consideration for some time, when in 1869 it was brought to public attention by placing "colonization" as a topic for consideration on the program of the Western Conference. At that session Chr. Krehbiel presented a plan for colonization. After some consideration of the scheme the Conference requested Krehbiel to associate with himself five other members of the Summerfield congregation and prepare the plan for publication in the Friedensbote. The scheme thus developed was published February, 1870. Viewed in the light of events which have since transpired, it must be conceded that the plan was very practical.

The scheme as published met with approval, but not sufficient interest was awakened to lead to actual colonization. At the Conference one year later the matter received no mention. Chr. Krehbiel, backed by his church, finally stood alone as supporter of the idea, but he was not to be discouraged. In the fall of 1871 the church sent a deputation of eight men on an inspection tour to the great prairies of the west to seek out a suitable place for a colony. This company, making its

trip overland in a single wagon, passed through Missouri into Nebraska and back through Iowa. Of Nebraska they reported favorably. It now seemed that the colonization scheme would receive a new impetus through the inviting opportunity of securing good farms almost as a gift.

Just about this time, however, a new movement arose which gave a new direction to the work already begun. Reference is had to the Mass-Immigration of Mennonites from Europe. As early as 1869 rumors had reached America that the Russian government was about to abrogate the concessions made to Mennonites and no longer to exempt them from military service; that the Mennonites, however, were not willing to submit to this change and would therefore probably emigrate en-masse. The dreaded law was later really passed, not only in Russia, but Germany and Austria likewise passed laws making universal military service compulsory.

That the passage of these laws would result in extensive emigration was certain, for the great majority of Mennonites still faithfully adhered to the doctrine of non-resistance. But in which direction the movement would go could only be conjectured. Africa, Australia, South and North America—all offered suitable conditions and inviting opportunities. North America was, however, soon given the preference. During the summer of 1870 a deputation from Prussia visited the United States. Other deputations followed from Russia. There were also independent travellers that made inspection tours to the United States and elsewhere. A company of these reached Summerfield, Ill., in the summer of 1872. Four young men, Bernhard Warkentin, Philip Wiebe,

Peter Dyck and Jacob Beer, composed this company. As these men here met with the already existing colonization scheme, and detected in Chr. Krehbiel a wise and far sighted adviser and leader, and in other respects found very agreeable conditions in that congregation, they remained at that place for a considerable time, and from it as a center made an inspection tour of the west, northwest, and southwest, accompanied by several members of the church. The Summerfield people were greatly pleased with this visit of brethren from beyond the ocean and gave them a cordial welcome. Heart and home offered its best in friendship and hospitality. In a beautiful little poem entitled "The Four Leaved Clover Leaf," Mary Leisy described their mission. Through the Friedensbote news of this visit from Russia and its significance reached the public. This visit gave a vigorous impulse to the colonization plans. Again plans were made, but now with a view to a possible union with the prospective immigration from Europe.

The coming in contact of these visitors with the Summerfield church and its leader is of importance to the General Conference history, because the immigration movement here first came in touch with a Conference church, and because already at that time relations were established which made Summerfield one of the main objective points and chief stopping places for the immigrants, by whom in turn acquaintances were formed which helped to make the later extensive union with the General Conference much easier and greatly hastened it.[1]

[1] No mention is made of the noble activity of the "Old" Mennonites, during the immigration movement, as that would lead beyond the legitimate sphere of this work.

The following spring (1873) brought another deputation to Summerfield, composed of Jacob Peter, Henry Wiebe and Cornelius Baur. Chr. Krehbiel accompanied these men on a land inspection tour to Kansas, with the result that all carried with them most favorable impressions of the advantages which Kansas offered.

Just previous to this the Summerfield church had entered into still closer relations with the brethren of Russia. It will be remembered that D. Risser had been called to Wadsworth from his position as teacher in the Summerfield parochial school, the latter school in consequence being without teacher. Through the first visitors from Russia attention had been directed to a talented young teacher in Russia, whom they thought it would be possible to induce to come to this country and accept this position. Upon Chr. Krehbiel's advice correspondence was opened with this person and a call extended to him. The call was accepted. In the summer of 1873 the new teacher arrived in Summerfield. Soon afterwards he entered upon his duties and for several years served very successfully in this capacity. This man was David Goerz, who, being among the first immigrants to this country and placed at an important center so far as the immigration was concerned, was easily led into prominence and usefulness.

Upon pressure by Chr. Krehbiel his long cherished colonization scheme again rose into prominence. He succeeded in organizing a colonization company from members within his own church. This company sent a committee under leadership of Krehbiel to Kansas "to examine accurately land and conditions, and if suitable and possible, to arrange for a purchase, subject to ratifica-

tion by the company." This expedition was joined by D. Goerz and several other Russian brethren. The result of the expedition was that the country about Halstead was selected as suitable for a colony, and arrangements were made which later led to a settlement under most favorable advantages.

In advance of the great immigration from Europe a few families had arrived during the year 1873, some of which temporarily took up residence in Summerfield. The mass-immigration occurred later. One of the causes of delay with some was the problem how to provide means for the transportation of their poor. For even with the richer churches it soon became evident that the cost of transporting their poor constituted a heavy burden ; to leave the poor behind was not deemed right. With the poorer churches the carrying along of their poor was impossible. Help was needed. Appeals for assistance soon reached America ; for it had already been noticed that among the brethren in this land there were sympathetic hearts ready to help those in need. The first appeal for help came from the so-called Stucky Swiss church in Russia, and was brought to the general attention of the Conference churches through the Friedensbote.

Again Summerfield took the lead, the first proposition and plan for rendering assistance coming from there. Jacob Leisy proposed (August 1873) that funds should be solicited in all churches, either as loans or donations with which to assist the poor brethren to come to this country. With others the appeal also struck a responsive chord. In all places this matter was discussed and a widespread interest and willingness to help became mani-

fest. Some plan was needed by which this willingness could be crystalized and brought to action. The Western Conference (Nov. 1873) furnished the plan. In the resolutions respecting this matter it was agreed that collections should be raised in the several churches. A committee was authorized to receive these contributions and to remit them for appropriate application. Into this committee were chosen Chr. Krehbiel, D. Baer and B. Warkentin,[1] all of the Summerfield church.

At about this same time a similar movement had sprung up among Mennonites not participating in the General Conference. With the representatives of that movement the above named committee entered into correspondence, with the result that the two movements consolidated and formed an aid society under the name of "Mennonite Board of Guardians" with Chr. Krehbiel as president, D. Goerz, secretary, John F. Funk, treasurer and B. Warkentin, agent. Its business headquarters the society made at Summerfield, Illinois.

A few months later another society for the same purpose was organized in Pennsylvania by "Old Mennonites" and members of the Eastern District Conference, which styled itself the "Mennonite Executive Aid Committee." This society, however, did not co-operate with the Mennonite Board of Guardians but engaged in independent activity. Both societies pursued the same noble purpose of assisting poor brethren in Russia and Germany to remove to America.

Both societies soon had plenty to do. Nor were the means wanting, although the country was still suffering

[1] B. Warkentin, a member of the first deputation, had united with the Summerfield church and now resided at that place.

from the consequences of the war, and even now the panic of 1873 was resting heavily on the people. The Mennonites of America pitied their oppressed brethren and were therefore willing to bring large sacrifices in their behalf. In May, 1874, so only a short time after the organization of the societies, the Mennonite Board of Guardians already had 11,500 dollars at its disposal and the Executive Aid Committee was not far behind with 8,000 dollars. These sums, however, constituted but a beginning to the contributions which, both as loans and gifts, flowed for the needy brethren. For in all more than one hundred thousand dollars were contributed.

But not only were the poor assisted, but the whole immigration was greatly aided by favorable contracts, which these societies made with steamship and railroad companies, for greatly reduced rates for all immigrants, and by supplying each company of immigrants, upon arrival, with competent and experienced guides, who in many cases accompanied them to their new homes; and finally by making arrangements for temporary resting places in Mennonite communities for companies of immigrants in their journey to their future home.

During the summer of 1874, the stream of immigration began to flow and so continued for several years. Settlements were made chiefly in Manitoba, Dakota, Minnesota, Nebraska and Kansas. In the United States Kansas secured the largest number of settlers. Those people who were assisted by the two societies also settled mostly in that state. Not all churches received assistance. Several neither asked for nor received any aid, but carried their poor with them at their own expense.

After the transfer to this country had been accom-

plished it was soon discovered that the payment of the travelling expenses for the poor was not all the assistance required. For they had to have a living after being here, and that was difficult to secure in that new section of country, where industry and natural resources were still entirely undeveloped. Everybody wanted work and there was no one to give employment. Starvation stared these people in the faces. Again the appeal for help— this time for something to eat, went forth, and not in vain. Though times were hard, whole car loads of provisions were sent to the sufferers and a large amount of cash was contributed. Of the very large quantity of provisions sent no record is at hand. It is known, however, that for the maintainance of the poor of Kansas alone about 5000 dollars were given, and that later about 10,000 more was raised for settling these people on farms. Besides these direct gifts a large number of poor families had been distributed among different churches in various states, where they were cared for until they could provide for themselves.

As the immigrants were so amiably received and fraternally assisted by their American brethren, it could scarcely be otherwise than that they, in grateful recognition of such kindness, felt themselves drawn to these brethren. The immigrants had come into more or less intimate touch with American brethren; acquaintances had been formed; though differing in external matters the spiritual relationship was recognized and so the way was prepared for continued fraternal relations and closer association in the future. Summerfield in particular was the place where the bonds of fellowship were early established. As already stated both D. Goerz and B.

Warkentin lived there for several years. Other leading men among the early immigrants also resided there with their families for several months, or stopped there for several weeks. Among such may be mentioned the deceased minister Wm. Ewert and minister Leonhard Sudermann.[1] As the colony of American Mennonites at Halstead, Kansas, (composed chiefly of Mennonites from Summerfield, Chr. Krehbiel himself also soon settling there,) came to be situated in close proximity to several European settlements, the intimate relationship already established at Summerfield was here further developed, and practically proved the door through which the European churches ultimately approached and joined with the unification movement of the General Conference.

* * *

From the school we parted at the conference of 1872. Let us see how it fared under the disturbing influence of the great tidal wave of Mennonite immigration. Of the new system of management introduced at the last session it was expected that it would produce more tranquil conditions within the school, and that with regard to external matters all would go more successfully and to better satisfaction, and that in consequence the institution would regain its former popularity. But the change in management alone was not depended upon to bring about this improvement. A decided effort was about to be made to wipe out the troublesome debt and to secure a fund with which to meet the annual shortage. In a number of churches the request of the Conference, to take up collections, was heeded. In the spring

[1] See Biographical Appendix.

of 1873, A. B. Shelly urged all churches thus to collect that by unanimous, concerted action enough might be raised to pay the entire debt. About this time a movement was started to raise a fund of 30,000 dollars, the interest of which should be used to meet the annual deficit. But just at this juncture, when these salutary efforts were about to assume definite form, the immigration excitement began to distract the attention and interest. The churches of the west were first drawn into the excitement, while the eastern churches continued to labor for the improvement of the school. But as the immigration assumed constantly increasing proportions, it finally carried all before itself and turned the expectant gaze toward Europe. And when the appeal for help came then the support was diverted from the institution to the aid of the needy brethren of Europe; money intended for the school was absorbed by the immigration movement. All the money that could be spared was contributed toward the aid of the poor immigrants and nothing remained for the school. The stream of immigration bore everything away before it, to the detriment of the school; —which neglected steadily drifted toward destruction.

Not only, however, through the immigration and its attendant claims were attention and support withdrawn from the school. The prospective foreign mission had a very similar effect. This condition of things was recognized at the time, as is shown in the following extract from an article by A. B. Shelly. He says: "Upon our Mennonite churches, formerly so little accustomed to giving, of late many demands are made for money contributions, so that if all the appeals are heeded, there is a superabundance of opportunity to make sacrifices.

The most important and pressing demand for money now comes from our needy brethren, the Russian immigrants. Large sums have already been given for this purpose; it now appears as though only a beginning had been made. Many thousand dollars are still required. . . .'' ''A further demand upon our churches comes from the mission cause. . . .'' ''Finally the school comes in for her share of support by the churches.''

Had the school at this time been internally in a prosperous condition, the temporary need would not have produced any permanent injury. Unfortunately, however, this was not the case. Disturbing contentions within the institution continued to eat away its vitality. One such trouble was occasioned through a refusal by the principal to admit a nephew of Chr. Schowalter to the privileges of the institution accorded to Mennonite youths, on the ground that the young man had been baptized in his childhood. By this imprudent action of the principal, the good will of the western churches was temporarily alienated, but to the permanent injury of the institution.

But even between the members of the faculty contentions of a most deplorable character arose. The double headed system of management for the school proved so irritating through confusion of rights and duties, that it finally produced a bitter conflict between the Theological and German professors. Both men were quick tempered. Instead of practicing forbearance in love, they allowed their passions to control them. Losing sight of the welfare of the school, each sought to make the other unpopular with the students; the German teacher apparently having made the grossest blun-

ders in this direction. Finally the trouble became so aggravated that the committee of supervisors made a serious attempt to remove it. A joint session with the sub-committee was called. In May, 1874, all members of both committees being present, the following resolution was adopted :

"Resolved that the students shall have unrestricted communication with every one of the teachers ; that it is the duty of every teacher to encourage the students to confidence in fellow teachers ; and that in no case shall it be permissible to use derogatory expressions, to expose weaknesses, or to make any statements which could in any wise tend to lower the respect of students toward any member of the faculty."

Although all members of the faculty promised to be governed by these instructions, this effort of the committee did not prove sufficient to remove the difficulty. The passions had already been too much inflamed. The fire, temporarily checked, smouldered on and under provocation soon broke out anew in threatening flames. After the session in May, W. H. Oberholzer, sub-committee member from the east, remained for some time at Wadsworth, in order to gain more accurate knowledge of the inner working of the institution by personal observation, and so be better equipped to act intelligently in matters pertaining to the school. As a result of his observations he, however, allowed his feelings to carry him into an action, which for a time threatened to prove fatal not only to the school but also to the Conference. For at his instigation a committee session was held on July 26, 1874, to which the members from the west and Canada were not invited. Upon Oberholzer's advice it was de-

cided at this meeting to request the German teacher to resign his position, because the Pennsylvania brethren, as also all the students from the east, had lost all confidence in him and that for this reason the east was now withholding its support from the institution. This resolution was then communicated to the other members of the committee. In the west, the German teacher being the representative on the faculty of that district, this procedure met with decided opposition. The western member of the sub-committee, Jac. Krehbiel III., immediately sent copies of the communication to all the churches of the Western Conference and requested their opinion on this matter. Councils were held at once in all the churches, and without exception the action of the Wadsworth session was disapproved and sharply rebuked. As the German teacher was in full possession of the confidence and respect of the western churches, the action at Wadsworth was considered in the nature of an affront to the western churches. The strained relations, which had been gradually arising between east and west, threatened now under this new provocation to become a complete rupture. The remonstrances from the churches were in part couched in rather caustic language and there was no lack of accusations. Thus for example it was claimed that at the General Conference the east had solemnly promised "enormous sums" toward the cancellation of the debt, but had failed to make good their promise, while the west had done its duty. As another example the following quotations may answer: "At that time, however, and long enough afterwards the German teacher was still held in esteem by the Pennsylvania brethren, that they might have fulfilled their pledged

duty; nevertheless they withheld their contributions—and now the German teacher is the cause of this 'withholding!' Such an inconsistent position is too glaringly wrong to be accepted as a sufficient reason for removing a man who at least can count on no insignificant number of supporters of the school, whose entire confidence he commands to this day." From the same writing we also take the following: "That the German teacher has lost much of his reputation in Wadsworth, we concede, particularly as the whole institution has suffered the same fate, not only in Wadsworth but far beyond, and that long before the present German teacher was employed there."

That passion was allowed to enter into this matter is cause for regret. The welfare of any cause is always jeopardized when excited passions are yielded to. If the eastern brethren were really behind in the fulfillment of promises as compared to those of the west, the situation was not improved by casting it up to them in such an unfriendly tone. Then also it surely would have been more consistent with christian forbearance not to have insisted so stringently upon their rights and the maintainance of their honor. For was it not after all possible that the situation in the institution might be improved by the withdrawal of the German teacher, whether the charges against him were well founded or not? Surely it would have been better to have taken this view of the matter and with self-denial have permitted this resignation. For it must have been plain to all that if east and west should permanently oppose each other the whole unification movement would be hopelessly wrecked. It was indeed a grave mistake which the incomplete committee had made, but the attitude of the west is likewise

not above criticism. Excitement had taken hold of the the people and under its influence mistakes were made on both sides.

After receiving the remonstrances from the several churches, the western sub-committee member added a letter of his own and sent the lot to the committee of supervisors. W. H. Oberholzer had meanwhile left Wadsworth. Upon the supervisors the forcible and unanimous disapproval of the western churches had an overwhelming effect. The antagonistic movemement against Risser had really not originated with them, and plainly they had not realized the full import of their action. Two members of the committee forthwith sent writings to the western churches, in which they confessed to having erred in this matter, one of them adding the assurance that it was an error not of the heart but of the head, as they had sincerely sought to advance the welfare of the institution. This, however, did not satisfy the west. They wanted assurance that hostilities against the German teacher had ceased before they would send any more students, wherefore they demanded that the committee officially report cessation of hostilities. This the committee did in November, 1874. Thus another threatening danger to the school and Conference had been narrowly escaped. But what must finally become of the school under these disastrous experiences?

Scarcely had the difficulty related above been settled then another came up. This time it was a contention between the principal of the school and the president of the committee of supervisors, Hiram Drake. At a meeting of the supervisors, held December, 1874, at which the faculty members were also present, the principal

censured the president. Drake had already before this time contemplated resignation, as the friction and petty hostilities which were rife in the institution were unendurable to him. He loved and desired peace. When now personally affronted, he lost courage entirely and a few days afterwards handed in his resignation, composed in a loving, christian spirit, and assigning no cause for his action.

At the next session of the committee the other two members made no inquiry as to the cause for Drake's action, but decided to request him to withdraw his resignation, and in order to make their request more effective they asked the sub-committee members to support this request if they saw fit. Two of the members acted upon the suggestion of the supervisors, but the western member insisted that he must first know more about the case before he could take any action. At the same time he accused the supervisors of general neglect of duty in not keeping the sub-committee accurately informed as to events in the school. This led to a heated controversy in which the western member was indeed in the right, but in pressing this right he exercised neither forbearance nor good judgment, making no allowance for existing circumstances and limitations. On the part of the supervisors the matter was treated more kindly and considerately, and as meanwhile the officers of the Conference had also added their request for Drake to remain, the supervisors took action without having the support of the western member. To these kindly requests Drake yielded and withdrew his resignation, but only upon certain conditions which he named and by which he aimed at the prevention of further friction in the school

and its management. These conditions he submitted in writing and they were signed by the committee of supervisors, the instructors and the steward.

This difficulty was thus also removed, but the harmful effects could not be prevented. While such discord and contention existed among those in charge of the institution, the school could not be popular with the students. It is therefore not matter of surprise to find that the attendance rapidly diminished and finally became so small that (April, 1875,) the English teacher, M. S. Moyer, believed it his duty to resign, because there were so few students that they could not be divided into classes enough to keep three teachers engaged, and because by reducing the teaching force a considerable sum of money would annually be saved for the institution. To Moyer the testimony can be given that he sincerely sought to promote the best interests of the school. He was the one steady, clear headed man among his volatile companions. When at times everything was going wrong and certain ruin seemed impending, he alone remained calm, and with prudence and tact conciliated the fractious elements and averted disaster. Moyer's services in this respect were appreciated by the leaders in the churches, for which reason there was an unwillingness to accept the resignation. He was urged to remain at least until the Conference should meet in the fall. To this he consented.

But not only was the school unpopular with the students. Rumors of a most disparaging nature with regard to occurrences in the institution circulated among the churches. Apparantly the teachers had lost control of the school, in consequence of which order ran riot among the students. For example it was reported that

during night one student had burnt the face of a fellow student with nitrate of silver, but that under the lax discipline the matter had been lightly treated by the faculty and the offender let off without proper punishment. Another report circulated that students had taken a goat to the second or third story of the building, had there placed him before a window and held a mirror before him. The goat, incensed at the defying attitude of his supposed antagonist, made for him and dashed through the window in a fatal leap. Whether or not such things really happened we shall not presume to establish. But they indicate very clearly in what sort of repute the institution stood with the churches at this time. These disgracing rumors once having gained currency could not fail to further injure the reputation of the school.

But the measure of disaster was not yet full. The deplorable conditions in the institution reached their climax when, during the night of July 3, 1875, the malicious attempt was made to destroy the building by fire. In an unoccupied room of the third story some one had filled a desk with wood shavings, saturated these thoroughly with coal oil, lit the contents, closed down the cover of the desk, opened a window and hurried away. Although so well planned this incendiary attempt was frustrated by God's protecting providence. The fire was not choked in the closed desk but smouldered on until it had burnt through the bottom of the desk. Some fire fell upon the floor of the room, which was also soaked with oil, and there burnt a large hole, but, remarkably enough, without any one discovering the fire it was some way extinguished. Not until the follow-

ing day was the discovery of the incendiary attempt made when the steward inspected the various rooms. What was most humiliating about this criminal attempt was, that it must certainly have been committed by some one in some way connected with the institution. For the incendiary must necessarily have been familiar with the conditions and interior arrangement of the place. However it never became known who committed the act. On this point an article in the Friedensbote says: "Who it is that is guilty of this malicious act and what his motives were will probably always remain unknown. But God's eye has seen all and He will know how to recompense the guilty one for this deed, which aimed at the destruction of a christian institution and which would have caused the destruction of much property and could easily have cost human lives, had not God mercifully intervened."

The many untoward experiences to which the institution was subjected in rapid succession had now seriously injured its vitality. By the immigration as also through the prospective foreign mission attention had been diverted from the school, and a large part of the support which would otherwise have gone to the school was absorbed by these new interests. Neglected by its supporters and torn by contentions within, the once prosperous work was rapidly drifting toward ruin.

For some time the more farsighted had realized that a crisis for the school was impending. Thus a letter addressed to a teacher in 1875 contains the following: "In view of the events of the past year must we not apprehensively inquire—can a blessing rest upon our institution when scandal after scandal occurs? I have sincere

compassion for the members of the faculty because of the destructive contentions in the institution." Some one, writing of the crisis toward which the institution was drifting, says: "May the Lord look in mercy upon our institution. . . . As matters go now it can not continue much longer. Something must be done. But as to what that something is I am as yet entirely in the dark."

In the presence of all these untoward conditions a disposition was still manifest not to abandon the institution, which had in the past brought such rich blessings, but to keep it up for the future. Articles written by eastern friends appeared in the Friedensbote in which the blessings secured by the school were recounted. Attention was called to the dangers which threatened it, and it was strongly urged that a decided effort should be made to save the institution from failure. J. S. Moyer for example writes as follows: "Important as the next conference session may be for the mission cause, it seems to me, it is still more important for the school. It is certain, unless a change is made for the school by the Conference, that this beloved work cannot exist much longer. External and internal troubles will cause its death. The financial situation alone is sufficient to wreck it. If we propose continuing the school and not let our undertaking be disgraced by defeat, then this 'wagon' must be dragged out of the mire."

From the pen of A. B. Shelly we have the following: "We are most positively convinced of the blessing the school has been to us. Eight young men who have shared the benefit of its instruction are now actively engaged at different places as ministers of the Gospel.

Obviously they are performing their work better and with greater aptness than they could have, had they not attended our institution. How many of these would have become ministers, had they not attended the school, can of course not be known, but it is doubtful whether all of them would."

At the district conferences the interests of the school were now taken under consideration. At the Eastern Conference, "after the condition of the institution had been thoroughly considered, a committee of five persons was appointed to devise a scheme for delivering the school from its present disastrous situation, which scheme should thereafter be submitted to the General Conference." The deliberations of the Western Conference led to an expression of satisfaction at the good which had been achieved through the institution, but no resolution was passed aiming at the relief from existing difficulties.

With the opening of the summer term (1875) it became sadly evident, how thoroughly the institution had lost its good reputation with the churches. For the school began with a total attendance of but thirteen students, and of these only six came of Mennonite families. Pennsylvania furnished two students, and the west stopped short with one. Yes, prospects were that attendance would soon cease altogether, for only eight remained for the fall term. Surely there was dire need that something effectual be done soon. Will the Conference in its approaching meeting succeed in removing the causes which drag the institution down, and will ways and means be found by which once more to restore the tottering school to life and to establish it to flourishing usefulness?

Foreign Mission.

The Mission Board had received instructions to open the way for the Conference to engage actively in foreign mission work – that is the spread of the Gospel among heathen. Accordingly they opened a correspondence with the Amsterdam Mennonite Mission Society, informing that body of the wish of the General Conference to co-operate with them in missionary work. They, in their reply, did not decline consideration of the proposal, but made their proposition on conditions which the Board under instructions received could not accept. The General Conference desired to co-operate on equal terms with the Amsterdam Society, so far as the control of the missionaries sent by the Conference was concerned. The Amsterdam Society was willing that the Conference should send their missionary, fix his salary and make it up for him ; the payment of it to the missionary should, however, be made through the treasury at Amsterdam. Then as to the position of the missionary and his particular place of labor, the Conference should have nothing to say, and only indirectly through the Amsterdam Society should he be accountable to the General Conference.

The conditions of the Amsterdam Society were fair, and no more was asked than was necessary for the maintainance of successful control of their missionary enterprise. However this denied to the General Conference the very thing sought, viz. active participation in the control of the mission work. After having continued this correspondence for several years, van der Smissen acting as correspondent, it was concluded that co-opera-

tion with the Amsterdam Society must be abandoned. The alternative was to enter the mission field independently. And this had to be done soon, for Haury had finished his studies and returned to America during the summer of 1875, and was therefore ready to begin his work. But the Board chose to take no action at present, but instead to postpone the matter and let the Conference take action upon it at its next session.

Home Mission.

By the three home missionaries appointed at the last conference session some work had been done. L. O. Schimmel had labored with the church at Germantown, in order to revive it and keep it from becoming extinct. In company with E. Hunsberger he had also been active among some of the churches of Ohio and Canada. The churches and scattered Mennonite families of Michigan had been visited by Hunsberger. Chr. Krehbiel also made several trips in the interest of Home Mission. In 1873 he visited the churches in Missouri. A little later he ordained S. F. Sprunger at Berne, Ind. In addition to this he travelled a great deal during this period, but mostly in behalf of the immigrants. But in this he had an especially good opportunity to do home mission work, and he by no means neglected it. During these years he was in constant contact with immigrants that settled in Kansas. Personal friendship and attachment was formed with all the leading men. He often preached in their churches. His advice was constantly sought and cheerfully given. His unselfish, voluntary services were appreciated and gained for him universal

respect and confidence. By this intimate personal relation the way for the union of the newly immigrated brethren with the Conference was to a large extent prepared and the actual unification facilitated.

The General Conference conducts her work through representatives or committees to whom for specified periods she delegates her authority. At every meeting, however, the Conference resumes all the delegated authority and directs for the future as is seen fit. If undesirable conditions exist in any one department it becomes the duty of the Conference to provide for improvement; if some new work is to be undertaken, the Conference must create the committees and give the instructions for the department. In both these directions the approaching Seventh General Conference had important work to perform. In the school the deplorable conditions demanded speedy relief. The present stage of development of the mission department made it incumbent upon the Conference to give final directions with regard to the inauguration of this work. For the accomplishment of the latter it was necessary on the one hand to open sources from which should flow the means with which to carry on the work. On the other hand a field for missionary activity had to be selected. These were important tasks; the one relating to the school somewhat delicate, because of the slightly strained relations between the districts and because of the animosities existing between teachers. No small apprehension was felt that the discussion of the school question might lead to scenes which would greatly injure the cause of union.

The greatest obstacles, with which the unification movement has had to contend, have not arisen from

doctrinal disagreement, but rather from differences in language, customs, habits of life, temperaments, and even from sectionalism and other such outward matters. The apparently impending crisis had its roots in just such differences among the co-operating elements. Disagreements arising from this diversity in external matters were practically unavoidable, as each one necessarily looked through his own peculiar spectacles and therefore saw things differently from the rest. The lesson which had to be learnt in the past, and which to this day needs to be observed is—forego prejudices and practice loving forbearance with that which seems outlandish or peculiar in others.

Seventh General Conference.—Session I.

The time for holding the Seventh General Conference arrived with the year 1875. Very prudently this session was not held at Wadsworth, but in Pennsylvania, far away from the place which at present fomented so much contention. It was also good for the Conference cause that by arrangement of A. B. Shelly the day preceding the Conference was devoted to a mission celebration, at which a number of spiritual addresses were made and many prayers offered, stimulating on the one hand interest in mission and on the other hand preparing all for a more pacific consideration of the questions coming up in the conference session. No person can be deeply touched by the divine spirit without becoming willing to subordinate narrow human interests to the wider and larger interests of God's work.

On Monday forenoon of November 15, 1875, the Seventh General Conference held its first session in the

Sunday school room of the West Swamp church, in Bucks Co., Pa., and continued its sessions until November 26. Accordingly the whole conference session occupied twelve days. No other conference before or after has occupied so much time.

West Swamp, Pa., Mennonite Church, in which General Conference met in 1875 and 1887.

Twenty-two churches had sent delegates; an increase of one over the representation in 1872. Two churches, Waterloo and Ashland, were not represented, while the new west furnished one church—Halstead—the fore runner of a large number which were to follow in the course of a few years. In the following list are set forth the details relative to the representation:

Church.	*Place.*	*Delegates.*	*Votes.*
1. Summerfield	Illinois	Chr. Krehbiel, Daniel Baer	5
2. Berne	Indiana	S. F. Sprunger	3
3. Franklin	Iowa	Chr. Schowalter	1
4. Salem	Dayton, Iowa	" "	1
5. West Point	Iowa	" "	2
6. Zion	Donnellson, Ia.	" "	5
7. Halstead	Kansas	Chr. Krehbiel, D. Goerz	2
8. Cleveland	Ohio	D. Krehbiel	1
9. Wadsworth	"	E. Hunsberger, I. Loux	3
10. Bartolets	Pennsylvania	N. B. Grubb	1
11. Baumannsville	"	S. Ott	1
12. Boyertown	"	A. Gottschall	2
13. Deep Run	"	Jos. Hackmann, E. Fretz, P. Leatherman, W. Moyer	4
14. East Swamp	"	J. H. Oberholzer	3
15. Gottschalls	"	Moses Gottschall	3
16. Hereford	"	C. Clemmer, A. Gottschall, J. Funk, D. Clemmer, A. H. Bechtel	5
17. Philadelphia I.	"	A. E. Funk, Abr. Neisz	2
18. Philadelphia II.	"	L. O. Schimmel, M. Schumacher	2
19. Saucona	"	W. H. Oberholzer, D. Geiszinger	2
20. Springfield	"	S. Moyer, J. S. Moyer, P. A. Mayer	3
21. Upper Milford.	"	J. Schantz, U. S. Shelly, J. S. Stauffer	3
22. West Swamp	"	Peter Sell, A. B. Shelly	6
		Total Votes	60

Seventh General Conference. Session I., 1875. Held in West Swamp Church, near Milford Square, Pa.

The auditing committee on the accounts of the institution reported that the debt had now reached the enormous amount of over eight thousand dollars. This

was two-thirds of what the building and ground had originally cost. Divided equally among participating churches a debt of 375 dollars fell to the share of each. As the churches were mostly small, some of them having less than thirty members, the task of shaking off this debt must have seemed stupendous. It was realized at the conference that it required a heroic effort to succeed. A committee of seven was appointed to devise a plan for securing funds with which to cancel the debt. This committee, however, simply recommended that the Conference request the churches to begin now and continue for one year to solicit promises of money toward debt cancellation. This conference also decided to make an attempt to secure a list of subscribers for annual contributions toward meeting the current expenses of the institution.

When the inner life of the institution was taken up for consideration, it was soon discovered that a minute investigation would be necessary to locate the cause for the unhappy and disastrous contentions. This work could be accomplished only through a committee. In order to be fair and to prevent all partisanship in the investigation it was agreed "that the chairman shall nominate twelve persons. Of these seven shall be elected, with the provision, however, that any delegate shall have the right to object to any of the persons nominated." The committee elected was composed of the following persons, A. B. Shelly, J. S. Moyer, Chr. Krehbiel, J. H. Funk, Daniel Krehbiel, S. F. Sprunger and David Goerz. Authority was given them "to call witnesses if deemed necessary." After having proceeded thus far the conference session took a recess, until the

investigation committee should have completed its delicate task. That the investigation was thorough is evident from the fact that the committee continued its work for four days, in which time twelve sessions were held. Their report is very important and contains points of interest to the reader, wherefore, though of considerable length, the report is given entire below, as follows:

"The conditions within the institution are of such a nature that a prosperous continuation of the school under the existing circumstances can not be expected.

"The origin of these vexatious circumstances dates back to the time of the call of van der Smissen; in that the call as composed in 1868 is in contradiction with the resolution adopted in 1866. Said resolutions assign the highest authority (principalship) in the institution to the head of the German department. But Schowalter, who had accepted his position on the condition that the superitendency should not devolve upon him alone, had assigned the principalship to van der Smissen. This, it is true, was done with the approval of the supervisors, but contrary to the Conference instructions.

Now, through the action of van der Smissen (who, resting simply on the terms of his call, without regard for the conference instructions or without having come to a proper understanding with the supervisors and Schowalter, had proceeded to assume the principalship of the institution by announcing himself as principal to the students), the relation between van der Smissen and Schowalter had become so strained, that even a personal reconciliation between them was insufficient to entirely prevent damaging results to the institution; for the contradiction of the call with the conference resolutions

manifested itself even after Schowalter's withdrawal, although under a changed form and under different circumstances. Just as the theological professor was not sufficiently clear as to his rights and duties, so also the other instructors as well as the steward labored under the same difficulty; personal prejudices and lack of confidence among these persons unfortunately fostering the suspicion of encroachments upon rights.

"Even the committee of supervisors appears not to have fully comprehended its duties, otherwise it could not have been a difficult task for them to have definitely fixed the precise duties and rights of the employees in the school, so that frictions from this source should not have been a hindrance to the prosperity of the school. If, however, the supervisors fully understood their duty the neglect thereof is evident.

"The natural consequences of these conditions were — disorder in the management of the school, disorder between the members of the faculty, disorder in the steward's affairs, disorder between the students, disorder in the present affairs of the institution in general.

"The theological instructor as principal, having lately immigrated from Europe, could not in all respects make due allowance for American conditions, and having an irritable temper, collisions with other instructors, who judged and acted from the American standpoint, were a natural but deplorable result which could not remain without influence upon the students.

"There being opposition between the teachers, factions were also formed among the students supporting one or the other teacher; this the more because the German instructor during the last four years had encouraged rather than opposed this partisan spirit.

"This partisanship was naturally directed by the instructors through influences exerted by them either intentionally or unintentionally. Thus the theological students were first given the preference in every respect by their natural patron, for example, in conduct toward them, at the table, in food etc. Those not studying theology had of late been attached more to the German teacher, this being encouraged by him.

"Under these circumstances this partial, or really unfair treatment of the students on the part of the teachers went so far that lately, particularly the German teacher, had used severe utterances toward students.

"In addition to the partisanship arising from the personal influence of the instructors, partisan lines seem also to have been drawn by sections, in that by one instructor the eastern students were preferred while the other favored those from the west.

"The instructors themselves, instead of setting an example to the students of the application of the principle of peace by friendly co-operation, studiously avoided each other and would have nothing to do with one another except where duty unavoidably compelled them to meet; the same unfriendly attitude being also observed between their families. This feud between two families, residing in the same building, sadly depressed the spiritual life in the institution; and separate aims were now pursued where all energies should have been united for the accomplishment of a common object.

"These evils within the institution could not fail to produce undesirable effects upon its supporters, the most lamentable result being that the institution lost its attractiveness as well as its students; those of the east

professedly remaining away because of the German instructor, those of the west because of the Theological professor.

"With regard to the steward's affairs it must be said that here too disorder prevailed. While one steward had given opportunity for unauthorized interference with the management of kitchen affairs on the one hand through mistaken considerateness, and on the other through neglect of his rights and duties, because not fully understanding his position, later stewards also did not prevent the occurrence of similar disturbances. However no complaints are brought before this committee with regard to the last two stewards.

"The English teacher has given no occasion for complaint with regard to disorder or partisanship among students; but it appears that he could not satisfactorily meet the demands of the department, because he was overloaded with work.

"With regard to the personal relation to each other of the Theological and German teachers we hope that all obstacles to a full reconciliation may soon be removed; which they can accomplish only by fully recognizing and sincerely confessing their mutual errors.

"The same must be said with regard to the ruptures between the Theological professor and Chr. Schowalter, Jonas Y. Schultz, L. O. Schimmel and Hiram Drake; which estrangements, it is true, are considered as removed and are here not mentioned as matter of complaint by any one, nor is it at all desired to stir up once more bitter feelings of the past,—nevertheless, we have not been able to gain the impression that the evil has been rooted up by the formal reconciliation, without a

confession on the part of the offender. Wherefore we feel ourselves compelled to say : that the desired and needed blessing upon the institution can not be hoped for until genuine reconciliation shall have been made and until genuine peace and harmony shall once more grace the institution."

The discouraging revelations of the investigation, coupled with the alarming increase in the debt, made it plain to the conference that something radical must be done to save the institution from collapse. A committee of five persons, including Chr. Schowalter, Chr. Clemmer, Chr. Krehbiel, Peter Sell and Daniel Baer, was appointed to devise a scheme according to which the institution might be conducted in the future. This committee augmented its number by asking A. B. Shelly and John Funk to act with it.

The plan suggested by this committee and adopted by the conference was that two departments be created. 1. Theology and German. 2. A Normal school conducted in English. Each department was put under the independent charge of one instructor. The schedule of hours was, however, to be so arranged, that students could pursue studies in both departments. The annual charge to students residing in the institution was advanced to one hundred and seventy dollars ; which, however, covered only elementary studies. Higher branches could be pursued only at an extra cost. Hereafter the institution should be open to all, whether Mennonites or not. Women were now granted admittance, although but a few years ago this had been obstinately opposed as a dangerous innovation. This plan should be tried for one year, from January 1, 1876, to January 1, 1877. Van der

Smissen was put in charge of the Theological department. The supervisors were instructed to find a suitable person for the Normal department. Risser presented his resignation and with the close of the year 1875 severed his connection with the institution. M. S. Moyer also retired in accordance with the already recorded arrangement. The change was indeed radical. The situation had been wisely and courageously dealt with, and the problem now seemed happily solved. But had the institution not lost too much of its prestige to be able to recover?

The second important task before this conference was to take definite action for the actual undertaking of mission work. Haury, as already stated, had completed his preparation and returned to America. He had now definitely offered his services to the General Conference; ready to be sent as missionary of that body. At this session he was formally accepted as General Conference missionary, and on the evening of November 26, was solemly ordained to the ministry of the Gospel "by van der Smissen, all ministers present assisting."

For the present Haury was directed to visit the Mennonite churches in America, in order to stimulate interest in the missionary enterprise "and at the same time he should look up a mission field among heathen in America, and in case a suitable place should be found, to bring this to the knowledge of the Board that they might present the matter to the next conference for further action. If, however, no suitable place for beginning missionary work could be found in America, then this should be considered as an indication from the Lord that work should be done elsewhere."

The present members of the Mission Board were re-elected to their office.

In accordance with the professed purpose to unite all Mennonites of North America in the General Conference, endeavors were made from the beginning to win the new immigrants for that movement. This was manifest at the Western District Conference, as also now at the General Conference. D. Goerz, who was present at this session, was made a member of several committees. Specimen hymnals, also circular reports of this conference session, were distributed among the churches of the immigrated brethren. There was already at this time some prospect that at least a few churches would soon unite ; for from two Kansas churches, Alexanderwohl and Bruderthal, letters were received, in which inquiry was made as to certain matters of faith and as to the conditions of union with the Conference. In response to this friendly inquiry the venerable J. H. Oberholzer was requested to prepare an appropriate answer, as also to extend to the inquiring churches and all others a cordial and fraternal invitation to participate in the conference work.

Soon after the opening of this conference session it was realized, that both the untoward conditions in the school and the unsettled condition of the missionary enterprise, made it advisable that the Conference meet in extra session before the next regular triennial session. Accordingly it was agreed to hold an adjourned meeting of the Seventh Conference during the following year. Let us now follow the developments of this intervening year.

That a decided revolution in the inner life of the in-

stitution had been achieved is apparant from one of van der Smissen's reports. Among other things he there says: "We have entered upon a new year, and with the new year the institution has begun its activity in accordance with the new plan mapped out by the Conference. This system differs so greatly from the former that it may properly be said: a new period has begun for the institution. While formerly German characteristics were predominent, the school will hereafter become more and more American. To offer young people of both sexes a course of instruction which shall prepare them for the teacher's profession under the requirements of the state, now constitutes the main object of the school." The change brought immediate improvement to the school. On January 6, 1876, a few days after the opening, van der Smissen could report that the number of students had again increased to twenty-five. Thirteen of these had their residence in the school. The privilege extended to women was not left unutilized, for as soon as opportunity offered four young women applied for admission. By the close of the first month the number of students had increased to thirty. The gain for the school, however, was not as great as the increase in attendance might seem to indicate. For what attracted the students now was the normal course, and as normal schools as good as the one at Wadsworth were near at hand in every state, few students were attracted from a distance. Of the total attendance but few were from outside of Ohio, and but very few, even of the Mennonites in the institution, were enrolled in the theological department. So while the attendance increased, it was felt that the school was failing at the vital point. It was

fast becoming a normal school for the locality, instead of being a school for the denomination. Preparation for spiritual labors was superseded by preparation for teaching and secular professions. But what proved most unsatisfactory was the fact that of the whole number of students only nine were from Mennonite families. The object for which the institution had been established and was now being maintained, was to raise up better equipped workers for the denomination, and in this respect the institution was loosing instead of gaining. The cause of this, however, lay not so much in the institution as in the people maintaining it, for they sent almost no students. The conduct at this time of the churches toward their school is very peculiar. They had for years been making heavy sacrifices for the school and were doing so now. But while doing so they withheld their children for whose benefit the institution was being maintained—thereby defeating themselves. What the school needed now as much as money was Mennonite students.

By a conference resolution it had been requested that a general collection be taken for the cancellation of the debt. Some churches acted on this request, but it did not develop into a general and simultaneous action. The western churches which had formerly contributed so liberally, remained inactive at this time, notwithstanding the pleadings of Chr. Krehbiel. By this collection about one thousand dollars were raised and applied on the debt. At its fall session the Eastern Conference made the proposition that the school be discontinued until the debt should be wholly paid. Had this course been adopted it is very probable that the institution would have been saved for the denomination.

* * *

The tour of the churches, which Haury made in accordance with the conference instructions, gave general opportunity to become personally acquainted with the man who should represent the churches as missionary. By his personal influence as well as through his addresses he succeeded in greatly increasing interest in the mission cause. While doing this work, Haury was also looking up opportunities for mission work in this country. A field was sought for among the American Indians. Through the Quakers, who were engaged in missionary work among the Indians, the way was opened to a suitable field. Matters had soon matured so far that definite action was about to be taken for settlement there, when progress was interrupted by a serious illness, due to over-exertion, which in May, 1876, overtook Haury while at Wadsworth; his recovery being for a time despaired of. By the Lord's graciousness he recovered, but only very slowly. Because of his weakened condition the mission cause had to lie dormant for several months. By October he had, however, sufficiently recovered to undertake an investigation tour into the Indian Territory. This trip had to be be made over land from Kansas, as railroads had then not been extended into that section of the country. In company with his brother Peter the journey was undertaken in a light spring wagon, drawn by two ponies. Upon the advise of the superintendent of Indian affairs he visited the tribes in the northeastern part of the Territory. The Kaws were first visited, and next the Osages, thirty-five miles further on. With the chiefs of the latter tribe a council was held at which Haury learned that the catholics

were very active there and that some of the Indians in form at least adhered to the catholic church. The Pawnees, about forty miles further on, were next visited. This tribe then numbered about eighteen hundred. Very little mission work was now being done among them, wherefore Haury was inclined to select this tribe for a field. One other tribe, the Sac and Fox, sixty miles further south, remained yet to be visited. But an obstacle now presented itself. One of the horses became lame and they could drive no further. No other team could be hired. But Haury was determined that this hindrance should not prevent the execution of the plan, so he saddled the other horse and rode on alone. For one who had lately recovered from a serious illness this was a daring undertaking, and few under similar circumstances would have had the courage to press on. The experience on this ride we let Haury himself relate, as follows :

"Under the firm conviction that I was on the Lord's way I could confidently commend myself to the Lord's care, and guided by him, undertake this fatiguing trip. Supplied with a little corn for my horse and some bread and meat for myself I set out on this journey at eight o'clock in the morning. A halt was made for dinner at the Cimmeron river. It was now one o'clock and the distance but half covered. As the water in the river proved salty I had to ride for about two hours more before water fit to drink was found. It was my intention to reach the Sac and Fox agency on this day. So I rode on until eight o'clock in the evening, when my horse was about tired out. As I now believed myself on the wrong road, and as I had no idea how far it was to my

journey's end, I had just about decided to camp out for the night under a tree, leaving the horse to graze on the prairie, while I would wrap myself up for the night in a horse blanket and shawl which I had had the precaution to take with me. Just then I heard the sound of a bell, and taking courage I rode in the direction of the sound and to my delight found several wagons loaded with flour and headed for the agency. The teamsters had built a fire near a river. I requested permission to camp with them for the night, to which they cheerfully assented. They showed their hospitality by cooking some coffee for me, and they even baked some bread—of course after their own fashion. For my horse, which I pitied more than I did myself, I secured from them some feed. They permitted me to sleep in one of their covered wagons. They themselves slept on the ground near the fire. Although my bed on the filled sacks of flour was hard, I rested well and slept soundly. On the following morning I easily completed my journey to the agency, for I was but two miles away. I was very grateful to my Heavenly Father that this trip was finished. For several days all my joints ached and my whole body was so stiff that I was almost unable to move about."

The return trip was accomplished without accident or particular hardship. Seventeen days had been occupied with the whole expedition. From the experiences on the trip it became manifest that the mission life would not be one of ease, but that it would involve the endurance of no little hardship.

In order to offer better opportunity to the immigrated brethren to become acquainted with the confer-

ence movement the Western Conference for 1876 was held in Halstead, Kansas. At this conference Haury, just returned from his trip to the Indian Territory, was present and reported. In the Conference itself that which most attracted the European brethren was the missionary enterprise. A proposition was made by them at this time to co-operate with the General Conference in carrying on that work. How this was to be done was presented in writing by Henry Richert.[1] After fraternal consideration of the matter the brethren were requested to submit their proposition to the General Conference which was now soon to meet.

* * *

According to the arrangement at the previous session the Seventh General Conference met for its second session on December 4, 1876, at Wadsworth. Only twenty churches were represented. From Pennsylvania there were three less, but one church from Kansas had been added, and that one from the ranks of the newly immigrated. It was the first substantial evidence of a genuine spirit of fraternity on the part of the European brethren toward the American Mennonites, and the honor of having led the way belongs to the Alexanderwohl congregation. This church brought with it from Russia a live interest in the missionary cause and in this country seized upon the opportunity to support the work they found already begun at their arrival. The union of this church proved a great blessing to the mission cause in its later development. At the conference session this church was represented by Henry Richert and D.

[1] See Biographical Appendix.

Goerz. Below is given a full statistical statement of the representation of the whole conference.

Church.	*Place.*	*Delegates.*	*Votes.*
1. Summerfield	Illinois	Chr. Krehbiel	5
2. Berne	Indiana	S. F. Sprunger, D. Reusser	2
3. Franklin	Iowa	Chr. Schowalter	1
4. Salem	Dayton, Iowa	" "	1
5. West Point	Iowa	" "	2
6. Zion	Donnellson, Ia.	" "	5
7. Alexanderwohl,	Newton, Kans.	H. Richert, D. Goerz	9
8. Halstead	Kansas	S. S. Haury	2
9. Cleveland	Ohio	D. Krehbiel	1
10. Wadsworth	Ohio	E. Hunsberger, J. R. Loux	3
11. Baumannsville.	Pennsylvania	J. H. Funk	1
12. Bedminster	"	J. S. Moyer	3
13. Boyertown	"	J. H. Funk	2
14. East Swamp	"	A. B. Shelly	6
15. Hereford	"	J. H. Funk	5
16. Philadelphia	"	A. E. Funk	2
17. Saucona	"	W. H. Oberholzer	2
18. Springfield	"	J. S. Moyer	3
19. Upper Milford.	"	U. S. Shelly	3
20. West Swamp	"	A. B. Shelly	3
		Total Votes	61

Seventh General Conference (Session II). Held at Wadsworth, Ohio, 1876.

In the deliberations at this session the financial interests of the school were first of all subjected to a careful consideration. It became questionable whether the industrial department with steward should be continued. A committee, appointed for this purpose, submitted a carefully computed statement in which it was shown that the receipts of the industrial department exceeded the expenses by one dollar and thirty cents; that, therefore, the institution did not only not loose by this ar-

rangement, but was a real gainer, wherefore they advised the continuation of the department. The conference, however, viewed the matter differently and decided not to keep up this department at its own risk.

During the year just past the expenses of the institution had again far exceeded the receipts, in consequence of which the debt had been increased by about eleven hundred dollars. The total debt now was 9849.61 dollars. The collections taken in the churches during the year, together with a special collection taken at the conference session, had yielded over two thousand dollars, which when deducted from the debt still left remaining an indebtedness of nearly eight thousand dollars. To meet an annual deficit of over one thousand dollars and in addition tug away at a large debt, surely was a severe test of the willingness to bring sacrifices of those few small churches. But, though there were temporary lulls in giving, the willingness to give liberally was great in those early years, and continued against great odds for a long time. Contributions in aid of the immigrating brethren had been very large ; the institution was incessantly making demands which were more or less liberally responded to. In addition those few churches had raised 2100 dollars between 1871 and 1876 toward paying for Haury's education.

Two points were made very clear to the Conference by long experience. In the first place the school, in order to prosper, must be cleared of debt, and in the second place it must be placed upon such a footing as to prevent all further debts in the future. To cover both these points was attempted at this conference.

In order to rid the school of the debt it was decided

to elect one person whose business it should be to solicit from house to house not only among the churches already supporting the institution, but also among such as had not shared in this work before. The person appointed should be paid travelling expenses, but should receive no compensation for his work. For this uninviting task Daniel Krehbiel was elected by a unanimous vote. And he, faithful to the last, with the advanced years now weighing heavily upon him, consented. It could easily be foreseen that in the prosecution of this work many unpleasant experiences would be met with. But Krehbiel was admirably adapted for this peculiar task. For in addition to an amiable disposition and winsome manners he had good common sense and tact. Above all, he was thoroughly devoted to the welfare of the institution, to the origin of which he had given the first impulse.

In order that the school might in the future be operated without giving rise to new debt, the institution was now divided into two distinct schools, one German, the other English. The instructor in the German school was allowed a salary of six hundred dollars per annum instead of one thousand as heretofore. A certain portion of the building was assigned to him for his private use and his school work. To secure his salary the amount was apportioned among the nineteen participating churches at eleven dollar per vote ; this arrangement to be binding for two years.

The part of the building not occupied by the German school was assigned to the English or Normal school. No salary was guaranteed to the teacher of that school, but he should receive twenty-five dollars from every student in his school ; his income being thus

entirely dependent upon the attendance at his school. No doubt this acted as an effective stimulus to win students for the school.

The industrial department, including board and lodging for students, was transfered to the care and risk of the German teacher, so no loss could arise to the Conference from this source.

In addition to these arrangements plans were completed for a scholarship fund. Persons contributing to this fund were entitled to draw upon it at any time for payment of tuition for students. Otherwise only interest, accumulated from this fund, could be applied toward current expenses of the institution.

This whole arrangement was business like and sensible. With but six hundred dollars to raise annually and this guaranteed beforehand, there was reason to expect that deficits were now a thing of the past. If now success should crown the effort to shake off the old debt, restored confidence rendering this probable, then the prospect seemed promising that the institution would once more flourish and prove a blessing to its supporters.

With regard to the Foreign Mission it was resolved, after deliberation, to instruct the Board to continue the inquiry for a suitable field for mission work, and when found, to begin the work. Upon their request the Board was permitted to augment their number by adding Henry Richert; this by way of fraternal recognition of his church which had just united with the Conference.

In order to secure sufficient funds for carrying on mission work, the ministers of the various churches were requested to hold monthly meetings in behalf of mission, and annually to celebrate a mission day, as also to estab-

lish local mission societies. A monthly mission paper, called "Nachrichten aus der Heidenwelt" (Missionary News) should be published by the Board. The Board appointed C. J. van der Smissen and Chr. Schowalter editors of this paper. It does not seem to have been a prudent move to publish this paper independently of the Friedensbote and "Zur Heimath", as those papers, in order not to render the reading matter of the mission paper stale, had to abstain from publishing news concerning the mission. It is probable that the mission did not gain as much in this way as it would have, had mission departments been established in the other papers.

All in all this conference session was pleasant and harmonious. Good will and cordial fellowship prevailed. What spirit was prevalent is interestingly described in an editorial in the Friedensbote, from which the following is a quotation :

"That this was a busy conference is very evident from the minutes. No one who reads what has been done will think that the brethren, the representatives of the churches constituting the Conference, made a holiday season of the eight days the session lasted. No, nothing of that sort. They had to work, and work hard. But no one not present can appreciate the greatness and difficulty of the task to be accomplished. Not only the days, but almost day and night had to be spent at work, particularly by the committees. For this reason it is no wonder that all were glad when the work was over and the session could be closed.

"On the other hand, however, there was much that was pleasant and inspiring, so that after all one felt sorry that this blessed season of fellowship had to be

closed and that we had to part. For the oftener our Conference meets the more we feel that we are brethren ; the more closely is the bond of fellowship drawn in love, wherefore parting occurs with increased regret, not knowing whether a similar privilege of association shall again be granted to us in this life. At no previous session, it seems to us, was the spirit of fellowship more prominent than at this one.

"We may well believe that it was the spirit of love, which is the spirit of Him who is love, that moved in the hearts of all and inspired to united, harmonious efforts for the cause of the Lord. And it was this spirit of love and harmony which, as we believe, made this session so very pleasant to all."

Although ominous clouds had in past years repeatedly risen above the conference horizon and threatened to discharge themselves upon the Conference in a destructive storm, they had now disappeared and no disturbing elements could be noticed at this session. The estrangement between east and west, which had at times been more or less developed, had by the Grace of God been removed, and the common cause was carried forward with renewed confidence in each other. The testing time was indeed not yet over, but one thing was now certain, that the unification movement could survive very trying experiences. Love for the general cause of the Lord outweighed all local or selfish interests. Love subdued the human and gave to the Lord's interests the victory.

"But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another." John.

CHAPTER IX.

Missionfield sought; various obstacles. Mennonite settlements in the west; rapid growth. Publication. Last years of the school. Eighth Conference. School abandoned. Retrospect on School.

The development of the mission enterprise shall first engage our attention. In accordance with the conference instructions Haury continued his tour among the churches and endeavored to create a more general interest in the mission cause. His labor was not in vain as could be seen by the rapidly increasing contributions. Not only did he labor among churches already affiliating with the Conference, but among others also. In his reports he speaks of visits to the churches in Butler, Putnam and Allen counties of Ohio; to Elkhart, Indiana; the Amish churches in northern Illinois; Davis and Henry counties of Iowa, and others. Everywhere he was very cordially received and opportunity to present his cause was gladly granted.

During this tour he narrowly escaped in a railroad accident. Near Hamilton, Ohio, the coach in which he was, left the track, broke from the train, turned a summersault and rolled on for about fifty feet. Haury had been sitting near the stove. By God's marvelous and gracious protection not only was Haury's life spared, but he escaped with but slight injury, not a bone being broken. He suffered several bruises and burns, and on

account of the latter he was compelled quickly to free himself and extinguish the fire in his clothes, for the awful shock and tumble had scattered the burning coal all over him and had set his clothes afire in perhaps twenty places.

After completing this tour, Haury was directed to give his attention directly to the selection of a field for his future missionary labors. This he did between July and October of 1877. The Cheyenne Indians, a tribe numbering at that time about 3500, had then just lately been transferred from the far north to the Indian Territory. As no mission work was being done among them by any society, it was thought that this constituted the opportunity sought for, and so Haury went to these people. He spent about two months at the agency and studied the people and their situation. While there he came in touch with another tribe under the care of the same agency; namely the Arapahoe tribe which then numbered about 1700. Of these he was led to make a closer study. He lived with them for a time in private life, attended one of their festivities, and, by living for three days in his tent, became well acquainted with Powder Face, the chief of this tribe."[1] The result was that he became convinced that the mission work ought to be begun among this people.

As pioneer missionary of the Mennonites of America it was not an easy matter for Haury to go forth into the mission field. Back of him as his supporters stood a

[1] With Cut Finger, a chief of lower rank, he spoke of his intention of settling among them as missionary. Cut Finger invited him and volunteered to give him some land among his tribe. The next day Cut Finger said to the agent that his tribe had adopted Haury.

weak, ecclesiastically unorganized and spiritually almost dormant denomination. Before him was a hard, wild and barborous people, proverbially difficult to evangelize. When on the field and in the presence of stolid heathendom, the great difficulty of the task rose up before him as never before, and discouragement seemed nearly to overwhelm him. The obstacles seemed too great to be surmounted, the task too great for achievement. Under those depressing surroundings he wrote as follows: "Again I am among the Indians. But as a mountain that cannot be crossed, the work for the accomplishment of which I was sent hither, stands before my spirit. The more I observe these poor Indians the less competent do I feel for the hard task of living and laboring among this people. In fear and trembling my heart would cry out: Send, Lord, whom thou wilt, only send not me!" A month later he wrote: "I cannot say that I enter upon the missionary work among the Indians with any great hopes of success. On the contrary, my spirit is depressed by the greatness and difficulty of the task, for the accomplishment of which I feel so incompetent. For I know that many more able than I, have spent their energy and lives among the Indians without any apparent success attending their labors. But, nevertheless, I believe that the Lord calls me, and if he calls it is not for me to inquire as to prospects of success. That belongs to the Lord. For this reason I can with joyful readiness of mind and heart go to the Indians—He sending me."

Upon his return, October 1877, Haury submitted to the Board the following outline of his plans. He says: "My purpose is as follows, that next spring, perhaps in

April, God willing, I shall again return to the Indians, there to settle among the Arapahoes. First of all I shall erect a small building to serve as a present home. During the following summer I shall then endeavor by the Lord's aid to learn the language of these people. . . . By fall of 1878 the Lord will show us how to carry the work on further."

For his decision to labor among the Arapahoes Haury assigns the following reasons: "My reasons," says he, "are these: More preliminary work has been done among the Arapahoes; they seem to be more willing to receive a missionary than the Cheyennes. The indian agent here has also advised me to begin my work with the Arapahoes. But above all I feel myself drawn more to this tribe; for the purpose above stated impressed itself upon me while I was upon my knees in the tent of Tschana Gamit (Powder Face), pleading with God that he help me to clearness and decision in this matter."

The proposition to begin work among the Arapahoes was approved by the Board, and they instructed Haury to spend the intervening time until April 1878 in further agitating the mission cause among the churches. While engaged in this work Haury's eyes began to trouble him. The malady kept growing worse, and finally became so aggravated that when the time appointed for taking up the work among the Indians arrived, he was compelled, instead of going there, to seek treatment in St. Louis. Three months elapsed before a cure was effected. In the meanwhile the prospective field necessarily remained unoccupied on the part of the Conference. When after full restoration Haury went to the Arapahoes in September, he found that during the delay

the Quakers had entered the field and that for two months past one of their missionaries had been located there. This of course made it questionable whether he should also begin work there, and as the time for the regular session of the Conference was now near at hand, the Board decided to postpone further action until after the Conference session.

Origin of the Kansas Conference.

Elsewhere has been related how by colonies of American and European Mennonites an extensive settlement had been formed in Kansas. As those settlers, both the American and European, are progressive people, and the close proximity of the churches rendered communication easy, it was not long before the fraternal fellowship began to assume an organized form. The American churches were drawn mostly from the churches belonging to the Western Conference. Several of the European churches had also united with that body. Thus they were familiar with the system on which the General Conference movement operates, and they soon sought to organize a conference for their section under the same system. As early as 1877 this purpose had sufficiently matured that on December 14, the first session of the Kansas Conference could be held, with ten churches participating. Matters considered were such as the care of the poor, home mission and church hymnal. The most important point considered, however, was the question of education. All these churches maintained parochial schools, and good teachers for these were in demand, but enough could not be obtained. The need for an institution was therefore felt, in which persons

might receive proper training for such work. In order to secure such an institution, a committee of seven was elected at this conference, to prepare a plan for a Mennonite academy and to submit it to the conference at its next session. Let it not be supposed that these churches were opposing the school at Wadsworth or that they were unwilling to support it. On the contrary several of their young men were at that very time studying at Wadsworth. But just as the school in Kansas is too distant for young people from the east to attend it in large numbers, so Wadsworth was to far away for the youth of the new west.

The further development of both this conference and school will be dwelt upon further on.

Western Publication Company.

By a combination of interests in the west, another enterprise had risen to considerable prominence during late years. A number of members of the Western Conference had organized the Western Publication Company, with business headquarters at Halstead, Kansas. In addition to doing a general printing business this concern also published a paper known as the "Zur Heimath," David Goerz serving as editor and business manager. This paper quickly secured a large circulation, and exerted no small influence in promoting the general progress in the Mennonite denomination through its sound views, its circumspection, tolerance, and hearty support of the unification movement of the General Conference. Naturally the paper circulated most in the west among the late immigrants; finding a readier reception than could the Friedensbote or any

other paper edited from the American standpoint. Temporarily the Friedensbote was injured to some extent by this division of territory. Nevertheless on the whole the undertaking was helpful to the denomination, and ultimately paved the way to the consolidation of publication interests in the hands of the General Conference.

* * *

And now let us again attend to the school at Wadsworth. By direction of the Conference the new system for the school was inaugurated on January 1, 1877. Whether this attempt would prove successful seemed doubtful to some. Van der Smissen, upon whom greater responsibility now rested, entertained small hopes. Relative to this he says: "I candidly confess that I enter this new phase of activity with fear and trembling." Nor was the attendance upon his school ever such as to inspire him to a happy mood. With regard to the attendance during the two years, 1877 and 1878, he later briefly reports, as follows: "At the opening of the year 1877 there were three students; when vacation came, the number had reached six. After vacation seven enrolled and by Christmas the number had increased to sixteen; after which time it as usually decreased until vacation. At the opening of the second year eight enrolled, some of which are, however, now teaching. The attendance reached ten, the present enrollment being seven."

From this comparatively small attendance on this school it does not follow that it was a failure. The ennobling influence which the aged professor van der Smissen exerted made lasting impressions for good upon all

who came under his instruction for an extended period of time. These impressions the young men carried away with them wherever they went and multiplied them in their later lives. Had but one able and consecrated minister gone forth each year from van der Smissen's school it would have abundantly paid to have kept up that work throughout all these years. The last years of van der Smissen's activity in the school have well repaid what they cost the churches.

But van der Smissen was not working alone. The English school was also doing good work. At first a certain Stutzmann served as English teacher. During the first term about thirty persons attended his instructions. Later the school was put in charge of A. S. Shelly,[1] then still a young man, and under his care the school rapidly gained in popularity. At first some difficulty was experienced in overcoming the lack of confidence in the institution, which had been occasioned, among other things, through the many and frequent changes. But when confidence had once been secured the attendance soon increased, reaching sixty during the first year and going still higher during the second year. Shelly himself reports of his school as follows :

"For one year I had the school alone, but was assisted in some classes by my brother Daniel, since deceased. The second year I associated with myself Mr. L. S. Schimmel, a fellow graduate of Millersville Normal school. We named our school the 'Excelsior Normal School', and planned our course of study with an especial view to preparing young men and women for teaching in the public schools.

[1] See Biographical Appendix.

"The attendance kept increasing steadily during the two years, and the prospects were so encouraging that we would gladly have continued, if we could have rented the building longer. . . . Our last term closed in May, 1879.

"Among the students that attended the German school and took English studies were H. R. Voth, Chr. Augspurger, Daniel Hirschler, S. J. Baer, J. High Stauffer and others."

The relation between the two schools was harmonious and highly satisfactory. No friction of any sort existed, and for the first time in years the life in the institution moved smoothly and delightfully on. Speaking of Shelly as a co-worker, van der Smissen says that it is a comforting fact "that Shelly is an amiable fellow teacher, under whose charge the English school has received a new and better form, and together with whom it is pleasant to labor hand in hand." With the students the institution was now held in growing respect and was regaining its old time popularity.

Financially the prospects of the school were also brightening. For through the energetic efforts of D. Krehbiel the collection was progressing nicely. He had begun his work in April, 1877, and continued the arduous task, some interruptions during winter excepted, until near the close of 1878. The result was that he obtained subscriptions toward debt payment amounting to over sixty-one hundred dollars. Seven hundred came from other sources, so that almost seven thousand dollars were available against the debt ; an amount nearly large enough to cover the debt as it stood in 1876. But since then through accumulating interest the debt had

increased so much that, after deducting the amount subscribed, a debt of over twenty-five hundred dollars still remained. It is not surprising that the conference workers, when they found so large a debt still on their hands after this heroic effort, felt discouraged. Now that by the solicitation from man to man throughout all the churches, the possibilities of clearing the school from debt seemed exhausted, the hope of ever ridding the institution of that burdensome debt was despaired of. From the first the school had suffered from a lack of wise and farsighted financial management. And for want of business circumspection and courage the institution was finally abandoned. Surely it would have been possible to continue the school a few years longer until donations could again have been solicited. A. S. Shelly was anxious to continue his school and was willing to rent the building. Very likely he would have been willing to pay the interest on the outstanding debt as rent. Thus an increase of the debt could have been avoided, and undoubtedly after a few years a fund for the maintainance of the school could have been raised, just as but ten years later a fund was raised for another Mennonite school.

But let us now see what the Eighth General Conference determined with regard to the school, the mission and other interests.

Eighth General Conference.

The Eighth General Conference met at Wadsworth, Ohio, November 25, 1878. Twenty-four churches participated; a gain of four over the last session. Of these four, one was from Pennsylvania and three from Kansas. But the gain in membership was proportionately much

greater, for several of the churches had each about three hundred members while none of the churches heretofore adhering had more than about one hundred and fifty members. The total number of votes of the Conference was now eighty-seven as against sixty-one at the previous session, this being a gain of twenty-six votes or about seven hundred and fifty members; that is, the conference membership had increased by almost one-half. The following table shows the representation.

	Church.	*Place.*	*Delegates.*	*Votes.*
1.	Summerfield	Illinois	J. E. Krehbiel, Dan. Hirschler, A. Hierstein, D. Baer,	5
2.	Berne	Indiana	S. F. Sprunger	4
3.	Franklin	Iowa	J. S. Hirschler	1
4.	Salem	Dayton, Ia.	Chr. Schowalter	8
5.	West Point	Iowa		
6.	Zion	Donnellson, Ia.		
7.	Christian	Kansas	S. S. Haury	3
8.	Halstead	"	D. Goerz	5
9.	Bruderthal	"		
10.	Hoffnungsau	"	D. Gaeddert	10
11.	New Alexanderwohl	"	J. Buller, Cor. Wedel	12
12.	Cleveland	Ohio	Daniel Krehbiel	1
13.	Wadsworth	"	E. Hunsberger, Jos. Neisz, P. Joder.	3
14.	Boyertown	Pennsylvania	J. L. Bauer	7
15.	Hereford	"		
16.	Bartolets	"	N. B. Grubb	5
17.	Gottschall	"		
18.	Deep Run	"	J. S. Moyer	8
19.	Saucona	"		
20.	Springfield	"		
21.	Philadelphia	"	A. E. Funk	3
22.	East Swamp	"	A. B. Shelly	12
23.	Upper Milford	"		
24.	West Swamp	"		
			Total Votes	87

Eighth General Conference. Held at Wadsworth, O. 1878.

The first important matter considered, related to a common confession of faith, this subject being agitated by the churches which had just united. For to these, in identifying themselves with this larger body, it was a matter of vital importance what doctrines the Conference held. It will be remembered that the Conference had never adopted any particular confession of faith, nor had any special confession been drawn up and agreed upon except that three tenets, non-resistance, adult baptism, and refusal of the oath, had been endorsed.

It was the desire of those now uniting that something more definite be adopted. Accordingly after prolonged deliberation it was agreed to accede to this wish. A committee of seven (Chr. Krehbiel, A. B. Shelly, C. J. van der Smissen, Chr. Schowalter, Dietrich Gaeddert, Leonhard Sudermann[1] and S. F. Sprunger) were instructed to "examine all catechisms and confessions of faith current among Mennonites", to reduce the result of their examination to a plan, and to submit this plan to the district conferences and later to the General Conference for consideration.

As early as 1872 the Conference had expressed its purpose to do home missionary work. The persons appointed at that time, labored in this capacity and some good was done. But after that nothing had been done in this direction. At the present session this subject was again taken up. A committee of three (L. O. Schimmel, D. Goerz, J. S. Hirschler) was appointed and instructed to draw up resolutions bearing on this line of work. This committee submitted a carefully developed and practical plan. It demands that the Home Mis-

[1] See Biographical Appendix.

sionary should devote all his time to this work, and among other things it presents a valuable explanation as to what constitutes the particular duty of the Home Missionary. For the benefit of the reader we insert this explanation. It is as follows :

"As the duty of the Home Missionary we conceive not only incessant travel and visiting among our churches, but rather a sufficiently prolonged stay at a place where work may have been begun, that his going away shall not be injurious to the work ; that is, until a church is fully organized and can care for itself, or provision has been made that their spiritual wants are looked after from elsewhere. Not that the Home Missionary shall be stationed for years at one place, or that he is to care for one church only, but the plan is that he shall give most attention to places needing it most, while at the same time he may do work elsewhere in the neighborhood, so far as he is able and circumstances will permit."

As Home Missionary the committee nominated S. F. Sprunger, minister of the Berne, Indiana, congregation. The plan as recommended was adopted by the Conference and a call was extended to S. F. Sprunger to become Home Missionary for the General Conference.

With regard to Foreign Mission the Board submitted a detailed account of their own labors, of Haury's travels, and the obstacles encountered in trying to launch the missionary enterprise. After recounting present hindrances to opening mission work among the Arapahoes, attention was directed to another inviting mission field now unoccupied. The committee report speaks of this matter as follows : "Unsought, and without anything being done on our part, the situation now points to

Alaska, where, as it seems, an inviting field offers itself to us, on which the work might be conducted with more freedom among a people more receptive for the Gospel."

Attention had been directed to Alaska by a report, in the "Deutscher Volksfreund" of February, 1878, of a speech on Alaska, which Dr. Sheldon Jackson delivered in Bloomfield, N. J., setting forth the spiritual need of the inhabitants as also their longing for the truth. He colors the opportunity as very promising to missionary enterprise, while climatic and other conditions are said to be exceedingly favorable.

After this matter had received due consideration, a committee, consisting of C. J. van der Smissen, J. S. Moyer, and D. Gaeddert, was instructed to draw up suitable resolutions on the subject. Upon recommendation of this committee the Conference resolved to send Haury to Alaska, there personally to study the situation. If conditions was found suitable he should then and there settle down and begin his work. If, however, he should find no opening, the Indian Territory should again be looked to for a field.

Up to the present time Haury was the only one who had given himself to the missionary service. Now another was added. Cornelius Duerksen offered himself, and the Board received instruction to employ him when able to do so.

The cause of publication also received some attention at this session. Both east and west the conviction had been gaining ground that publication is properly a function of the General Conference, and that the interests of the Conference could be better subserved by one paper, published by that body, than by several

papers not under conference control as at present. It was therefore resolved to elect a committee of three, whose duty it should be to correspond with the Eastern Conference and the Western Publishing Company with a view to arranging within a year, if possible, for the consolidation of the Friedensbote and the Zur Heimath. The persons elected on this committee were A. B. Shelly, Chr. Schowalter, and D. Goerz.

* * *

From what has been recorded on previous pages, it is known that the school was at this time in a comparatively prosperous condition. This, with the greatly reduced debt, it seems, should have been good reason for the Conference once more to take courage to carry on the work with renewed confidence. Nor had the abandonment of the school been seriously contemplated previous to the conference session. In fact the Western Conference had expressed its wish, that it be continued, in the following resolution: "Since the present school at Wadsworth with the capable principal is exactly suitable for the education of missionaries, the Western Conferene can have but the one desire, namely: that this school be continued." A similar sentiment prevailed in the east. It is therefore the more surprising and unaccountable that the conference members now became disheartened. It seems impossible that a work, which had cost so many sacrifices and which now once more gave promise of successful development, should be abandoned. And yet this is precisely what was done. For this session resolved to discontinue this school and sell out the plant, as appears from the following extract from the minutes:

"The consideration of the school matter led to this resolution: As the last plan for the conduct of the school was limited to two years and must therefore be renewed or replaced by another, a committee of seven, including the conference officers, shall examine the reports of the German and English teachers as also that of the committee of supervisors, and study the history of the school for the last two years, in order that they may submit to the conference a plan whether to continue this school and in what manner. This committee shall be composed of A. B. Shelly, Chr. Krehbiel, Chr. Schowalter, A. E. Funk, Daniel Krehbiel, J. L. Bauer and S. F. Sprunger.

"On the evening of December 2, a special session was held to hear the report of this committee and to deliberate on the course to be pursued in the future.

"The result of that session is summed up in the following resolution:

"As the present double arrangement of our school does not seem to be suited to the development of an educational influence generally beneficial, and as experience shows that the location is not the best for the continuation of a school in which the German language predominates, and that therefore such a school does not prosper well here, be it resolved:

a. To instruct the Mission Board to re-establish the school at some other more suitable place, in accordance with the originally adopted constitution. The necessary equipment (for that school) shall be taken from this institution, and if not enough, the further needs shall be covered by voluntary contributions.

b. The salary of the German teacher shall be raised from tuition and by annual collections to be taken in all conference churches.

c. If van der Smissen is willing to take charge of that school, he shall have the privilege to do so; if not, the Conference pays him 1500 Dollars indemnity, thereby cancelling all conditions agreed upon in the call. In the latter case the Mission Board shall, if possible, employ some other competent person to have charge of the German shool. If no one can be secured the school shall be discontinued until the next conference session.

d. The money necessary to cover the indemnity shall be raised by collection, and shall be paid by March 1, 1879. If this can not be done, the Board ot Supervisors are herewith authorized to borrow the money necessary.

e. The Conference instructs the Board of Supervisors together with the sub-committee and the conference officers to sell the building and real estate, if possible at its present market value. From the proceeds of the sale first of all shall be paid all debts of the institution. The remainder shall be invested on good security as a fund for the further continuation of the school elsewhere.

f. If the committee is unable to sell the school within three months, it shall rent the building to some acceptable person at a suitable rental for the carrying on of an English school, until the next conference session. In the latter case the present teachers shall have the use of the building until the close of the current school year at a rent to be named by them selves, provided, however, that the rooms now occupied by the German teacher need not be vacated before April 1, 1879.

g. As security for the debts now resting on the school, if no sale is effected, the Conference directs the supervisors to borrow money at the lowest possible rate of interest and to secure the loan with a mortgage on the property. To protect the mortgagee against loss, the supervisors are instructed to insure the building against fire.

h. The Conference makes it optional for the Mission Board to educate missionary candidates in other institutions, if this can not be done in our own."

As members upon the Board of Supervisors were elected: Joseph Kulp, Anthony Overholt, and Isaac Neisz; as sub-committee members: Jacob Krehbiel III., John H. Funk and Daniel Krehbiel.

These resolutions of course contained the death sentence of the present institution; the school at Wadsworth must now inevitably cease as a Mennonite institution. But one thing is clear—school as such was not abandoned. On the contrary the school was simply to be transferred to some other locality. That in this removal to a place where the German language formed the medium of communication, Kansas was had in view, cannot be doubted, as at that very time efforts were being made to establish an academy in that state. But that this school was sacrificed, even with the prospective academy in view, must be acknowledged to have been an unfortunate mistake. The Conference should have retained ownership of the property even though it would have been necessary to discontinue the school for a few years. But now in a moment of weakness and discouragement that was abandoned which it had cost much time, effort and expense to acquire. That this building, about

which so many associations of the early history of the Conference cluster, passed from the control of the Conference is cause for permanent regret to every friend of the cause.

Leaving the rest of the history behind for a time, let us follow the career of the school to its conclusion.

The supervisors did not adhere closely to instructions received. In January of 1879, they resolved to sell the property at public sale, if no buyer should be secured within three months. Objection being raised to this, the public sale did not occur. When the three-month-limit set by the Conference had expired, the building still remained unsold. According to instructions the building should now have been rented, and a settlement of claims have been made by mortgaging the property. But the committee refused to rent, though A. S. Shelly was anxious for it. His urgent requests were passed by unheeded. The money for van der Smissen's indemnity should have been raised by collection, but no collections were inaugurated. When April arrived van der Smissen vacated the building without having received his due. Even the gathering in of the unpaid subscriptions made to Daniel Krehbiel was neglected. The whole matter seemed at a dead stand-still. The supervisors did not possess sufficient business ability, and no one else seemed willing to give or do anything. The ship, having been abandoned, was allowed for a time to drift. There seemed to be danger now that the enterprise, once so nobly supported, would yet end in disgrace, in that debts contracted in its behalf would be left unpaid. But not all, if any, were willing that it should come to this. Many, both east and west, were ready to do anything necessary to honorably close the career of

the school. Among these may be mentioned in particular Daniel Krehbiel, the originator of the school, who, speaking of this matter, says: "I desire to let the brethren know that I am not one of those who say: I shall do nothing now, let come what will. My weak abilities and resources are still at disposal to keep disgrace from the Mennonites."

When in June the supervisors were in sore straits because the creditors demanded payment, whereas they had nothing with which to pay, a scheme was originated in the east to sell the property in shares to members of the Conference, and thus be rid of the debt, while at the same time the property would be held for the denomination. That this was a very sensible and practicable scheme must be conceded. We are not a little surprised therefore that Daniel Krehbiel disapproved of it. He wanted greater liberality on the part of the Mennonites. What seemed to him not quite as it should have been was that some were willing to supply money when they could secure property right, while they were unwilling to donate the same money outright. As this scheme did not promptly meet with approval, and a buyer was found in the meantime who offered an acceptable price, this good plan was dropped. The whole property was then sold in July, 1879, for five thousand dollars, to a certain Mr. Dague, whose son proposed to conduct a normal school in the building. How strange! Here is a number of churches with many children to educate, and counting among its members not a few worth from fifteen to fifty thousand dollars, and they let go of a school, simply because they cannot raise five thousand dollars. To relieve them one man alone buys the property, in

order that his son may have a chance to conduct a school! Surely, there was no need to sacrifice this place so dear to many, so full of promise for the future!

Once more the school at Wadsworth received attention from the Conference. In 1881 E. Hunsberger submitted the account. It appears that even after sacrificing the building there still remained a debt of 685.38 dollars for which the Conference was liable. There seemed to be a wide-spread unwillingness to do anything more. But upon the urgent appeal of Chr. Krehbiel it was agreed to divide the remaining debt equally between the Eastern and Western Conferences and thus honorably to relieve the General Conference of this obligation. Both Conferences did as agreed. The final amount to be paid was 788.76 dollars. Toward this the Eastern Conference paid 399.38 dollars, the Western 592.23 dollars; there being therefore now a surplus of 202.87 dollars, which according to agreement was paid into the Foreign Mission treasury. Thus the General Conference was honorably relieved of its debt, but it was also without a school. The Mennonites of America no longer had an institution of learning. The career of the school at Wadsworth is ended.

But shall the discontinuance of that school be proof that the undertaking was a failure? Is it true that it would have been just as well or better if there never had been such a school? Has all the money spent on that work been spent in vain? Have all the prayers been unanswered? Does no blessing corresponding to the sacrifices abide with the church? Questions such as these crowd upon us as we turn our eyes in retrospection upon the first Mennonite educational enterprise. A statistical review will therefore not be amiss at this place.

As a Mennonite institution the school opened its doors on January 2, 1868, and closed them on December 31, 1878. The school work therefore extended over exactly eleven years. During the first nine years, that is, before division into two schools, the total enrollment amounted to 310 students. This gives an average attendance of a little over 34; surely not a bad record for those early years and small beginnings, when as yet there was so little general interest in, and appreciation of education. Many students of course attended for several years, wherefore the number of different persons who attended is less than the total enrollment. As near as can be ascertained, 209 different persons attended during the stated nine years. As the roll kept states only the name and home of students, it cannot be accurately ascertained how many Mennonite youths there were among the students, but it is certain that at least 130 were from Mennonite families, and it is probable that the number was much larger. Of the last two years no roll is accessable, but it is known that the attendance during this time, taking the two schools together, was larger than it had been at any time previous.

The erection and maintainance of the institution was accomplished with no small expenditure of money. If we remember that Mennonites were practically unaccustomed to donating money for the general cause of the Lord, their generosity toward this enterprise surprises us. For toward the erection of the building and the maintainance of the school no less than 31,700 dollars were contributed, and that mostly by seventeen small churches, whose total membership did not exceed 1400. In particular does the small congregation at Summerfield,

Illinois command our admiration, for they alone contributed more than 5400 dollars toward this cause.

But how about the blessings, the benefits, which at the founding were so confidently expected? That visible blessings were not wanting at the time when the school closed, is evident from an article by A. B. Shelly, published in the Friedensbote in 1879. He says: "Among our ablest ministers, both west and east, engaged in blessed work for the Lord, are some who have secured their education in our school. Almost in every church are some who for a longer or shorter period have attended that institution, and who are now exerting their influence as leaders and teachers in Sunday schools etc. Whether the churches realize it now or not, they would painfully feel it, if suddenly everything the school has given them should be removed." Several years later A. J. Moser contributed and article to the Zur Heimath, in which he refers to the beneficent influence of the school as follows: "Although the work must at present rest at the center (the school), there are nevertheless single forces at work everywhere in the great circumference. And if never again a common educational institution should be established among Mennonites (which no one will dare to assert), the influence of the Wadsworth school will continue to be active into the distant future. Are there not here and there in different churches a number of ministers engaged in useful and blessed work, for which they received the inspiration in that school! By them the churches are stimulated to greater activity; and the gulf, which not infrequently separates ministers from each other, and churches as well, is gradually filling up, in that there is a gradual approach to mutual

recognition as co-workers. These certainly are blessings which by no means indicate failure of the cause."

And now, while this is being written, almost twenty years after the close of the school, can any fruits be shown which are traceable as blessings from that school? Yes, to-day more than twenty years ago. The educating as well as spiritually quickening influences, which were transmitted through students to churches, have silently but effectually been at work transforming and uplifting whole communities. Those churches in which students became active workers, stand now in striking contrast with such as have not had the benefit of such or similar advantages. A number of the former students are now among the main workers in the general unification movement. Among these may be named : J. S. Moyer, N. B. Grubb,[1] A. S. Shelly and Allen M. Fretz[2] in Pennsylvania ; S. F. Sprunger in Indiana ; in Missouri M. S. Moyer and P. P. Lehmann ;[3] in Kansas William Galle and J. S. Hirschler. All of these are successfully engaged in the ministry. To this list belong also the well known general workers : Home Missionary, J. B. Baer,[4] I. A. Sommer,[5] editor of the Bundesbote, and H. R. Voth,[6] missionary to the Moqui Indians. And the Foreign Mission enterprise – is it not a direct result of the school? When such fruits can be shown, no doubt can remain as to whether the institution which produced them, was a success. The sacrifices made in its behalf are richly rewarded. The school at Wadsworth may well be gratefully remembered by the denomination, to whose welfare it was devoted.

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[1] See Biograph. Appendix. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid. [4] Ibid. [5] Ibid. [6] Ibid.

FOURTH PERIOD.

PERIOD OF EXPANSION.

CHAPTER X.

Foreign Mission. Alaska. Mission founded among Arapahoes. Development of missionary activity.

Although a mission field had now been sought for for a long time, none had as yet been fixed upon. The way did not seem to open to a field where the work might be undertaken, without encroaching upon others. For this reason the Conference was glad for the apparantly promising opening in Alaska, and accordingly had directed Haury to make an investigation tour to that distant country. Alaska is situated in a high latitude and has therefore a cold climate. It was therefore thought prudent to delay the trip until spring. While waiting for the approach of spring, Haury made the necessary preparations for this adventurous expedition. To undertake such a journey into a wild and barbarous country—a journey in which much exposure and hardship must be endured—to undertake this alone did not seem advisable; so a travelling companion was wanted. Haury, it will be remembered, was a member of the Summerfield church. In that church there was at this time a young

man who had for a number of years taken deep interest in spiritual things, and now felt within himself the promptings of the spirit in one way or another to serve the Lord in missionary effort. He naturally followed with intense interest the developments of the missionary movement, and when Haury in February, 1879, visited at his home in Summerfield, this young man consulted with Chr. Krehbiel, his minister, who was also president of the Board, and with Haury, and being encouraged by both, he offered himself to the Mission Board as Haury's companion. Not only did he offer to go and give his time, but he undertook also to pay all his own expenses on this adventurous and expensive journey. This self-denying, self-giving man was J. B. Baer, later Home Missionary of the General Conference.

Only a few weeks later, on March 10, 1879, the journey to distant Alaska was begun. The trip was made via San Francisco, thence to Portland, Oregon, by boat. After a brief stay at the latter place the travellers embarked again, and after nearly a month at sea, they landed at Sitka, situated on the most southern point of Alaska. This place had been determined upon as the present destination ; the purpose being, if possible to establish a mission station in that vicinity. On the day preceding the arrival at Sitka their boat had stopped for a few hours at Fort Wrangle. At that place they visited a Presbyterian missionary, Young by name, engaged in mission work among the Indians of that section. This missionary was overloaded with work and urgently requested that Baer remain and assist him for one month by teaching in his school. After their arrival in Sitka they decided to accept Young's proposition. Accordingly

Baer returned to Fort Wrangle on the following day and taught Young's school, while Haury remained in Sitka.

Upon presentation of his letters of recommendation from the government at Washington, Haury was very cordially received by the United States revenue collector, Mr. Ball. A small house belonging to the government was granted Haury for temporary use. This house contained a little furniture. A mattress Haury borrowed, and this with a woolen cover sufficed for a bed. Bread he bought. Fish and coffee he prepared for himself. Thus his physical wants were provided for.

Inquiries made while yet at home had led to the impression that no missionary society had as yet undertaken work in Sitka. However the case was different. For during the preceding year a Presbyterian missionary had been stationed there. It is true, he had again left the field that fall, but it was not certain that the Presbyterian Society had abandoned the work. The expectation at Sitka was that a successor to last year's occupant would arrive soon. Haury believed it would be an unwarranted intrusion to settle down permanently before knowing whether or not the Presbyterian Board had abandoned this station. So he concluded to await further developments. But while waiting he did not remain inactive. Some of the Indians desired him to open a school. He did so on April 14, and found to his satisfaction that a large number took advantage of the opportunity. Occasionally he had as many as one hundred pupils. On Sundays he held services, and these too were attended by the Indians, the audiences numbering from forty to one hundred. Haury was enabled to do this work by the aid of an interpreter, an Indian, whom he paid a small sum for his services.

When one month had elapsed, Baer rejoined Haury at Sitka. Meanwhile information had arrived that a Presbyterian missionary was on his way to Sitka to resume the work there, and that he would arrive about the middle of May. Although the situation was very attractive and the prospects promising—although to leave this inviting field and again begin the search for some place in which to work proved no small trial, nevertheless Haury and Baer, after prayerful consideration of the matter, decided to leave, and not become guilty of intrusion upon the work of others.

Two possible fields were now taken under consideration; one was Chilkot, about 150 miles north of Sitka; the other was the Aleutian Islands about 800 miles to the west. Chilkot could at that time not well be reached, as no ships touched in that region, so that, should they attempt to go there, the trip must be made per canoe. They preferred not to attempt this and so decided to go to Kodiac Island, the largest of the Aleutian group. They also decided that, should no field open there, they would push further on to Cook's Inlet. Opportunity to reach Kodiac was offered by the Revenue Cutter "Richard Rush," which sailed from Sitka on the twenty third of May. Two days later they reached their destination. They secured a temporary home with Mr. Stauff, who was the business agent for a firm dealing in ice, and who had his residence on a little island (Wood Island), situated about one and one-half miles from Kodiac. They remained here for two months, there being no opportunity to leave, ships touching there but rarely. They found that about 2200 natives inhabit those islands, who, however, live in widely scattered settle-

ments. They were unable to do any missionary work among the natives, as they did not understand their language and no interpreter could be secured. To settle here they did not feel free, as the Russian church was well represented and had a strong hold upon the people.

Tired of waiting and anxious to reach their northmost destination—Cook's Inlet, about 200 miles distant, before the approach of winter, they ventured upon a daring undertaking. Stauff had a little sailboat, 28 feet long, which he consented to let them use. Committing themselves to the protection and guidance of God, they embarked in this little shell. Of course comfort was not to be thought of, on the contrary this perilous journey could not be accomplished without much hardship. Their crew consisted of two natives. As Stauff himself accompanied them they had a total of five men on board. The two natives slept in the hold of the ship, the other three lived in the little cabin, which had a floor room of but six by eight feet and measured but four feet to the ceiling. In these narrow quarters they cooked, dined and slept. As food supply they carried with them bread, potatoes, tea and coffee. With meat they supplied themselves by catching fish with the hook. The natives were unable to perform all the sailor's work alone, which made it necessary for Haury and Baer to assist in raising and lowering anchor, in the management of the sails, in steering and rowing. In case of calms they were not infrequently compelled laboriously to row the clumsy "Alaska" for a considerable distance before an anchoring place could be found.

On June 19, they came into the region known as Cook's Inlet. They landed at Taiumik, an Indian set-

tlement, which is situated a little above the sixty first degree northern latitude. They learnt that about six hundred natives live about that gulf in scattered little companies. After a short stay at Taiumik they pushed thirty five miles further to the north-east to the mouth of King river. There also they met Indians. But most of these came from the interior, and, having settled for the summer on a small island, were engaged in securing their winter's supply of fish. Their stay there was on June 20, and 21, the longest days of the year. Certainly the days were long enough, for the sun stood above the horizon for over twenty hours and during the short time between sunset and sunrise it remained so light that they could easily read or write.

The return trip to Kodiac Island was begun on the twenty-first of June. But the worst part of the journey now began. At one place nice coal had been found lying on the surface of the ground and Stauff could not resist the temptation to take some along, and once started he overloaded the little craft. Before they had proceeded very far they were overtaken by a severe storm. As the boat was not strongly built, its heavy load proved too great a strain and it sprung a leak, in consequence of which they came very near sinking. For several hours they labored desperately at dipping water, and yet the water rose in the ship until it was nearly full, there being several inches of water even in the cabin. And all this time they were in danger of running on some hidden rock and thus be wrecked. The situation was rendered more desperate by the fact that the native seaman, upon whom they had depended most, was sick and unable to do anything. But in all this storm and peril the Lord

graciously kept them from harm, and finally on July 7, after spending sixteen days on the return trip, they landed safely at Stauff's home on Wood Island, "glad and thankful to be permitted to set foot upon solid ground." They had travelled seven hundred miles on this adventurous journey.

As they had not found an open field for missionary labor, their intention now was to return to the states as soon as possible. But there was no opportunity to get away from Kodiak. Had there been an open field for labor here, they would have gone to work. As it was, nothing remained for them to do, but patiently to await the arrival of some ship on which they could leave. As early as the middle of July a trading vessel from San Francisco had been expected. That time came but not the ship. Week after week slipped wearily away and still the ship failed to come. Their patience was sorely tried until at last, on August 27, the longed for vessel arrived. Great was their joy. For not only did it offer them opportunity to return home, but it brought them letters, the first they received since the tenth of May ; an indication of how isolated up to that time that distant country was from the civilized world. On August 31 their ship hove anchor and sailed for San Francisco. On this trip they had another terrific storm to endure which lasted for eighteen hours, the ship, however, suffering no serious harm. Their ship cast anchor in the harbor of San Francisco on September fifteenth. In order to reduce expenses as much as possible, the trip from San Francisco to Colorado Springs was made in an emigrant train ; half fare being thus secured. From Colorado Springs to Halstead, Kans., the Board had

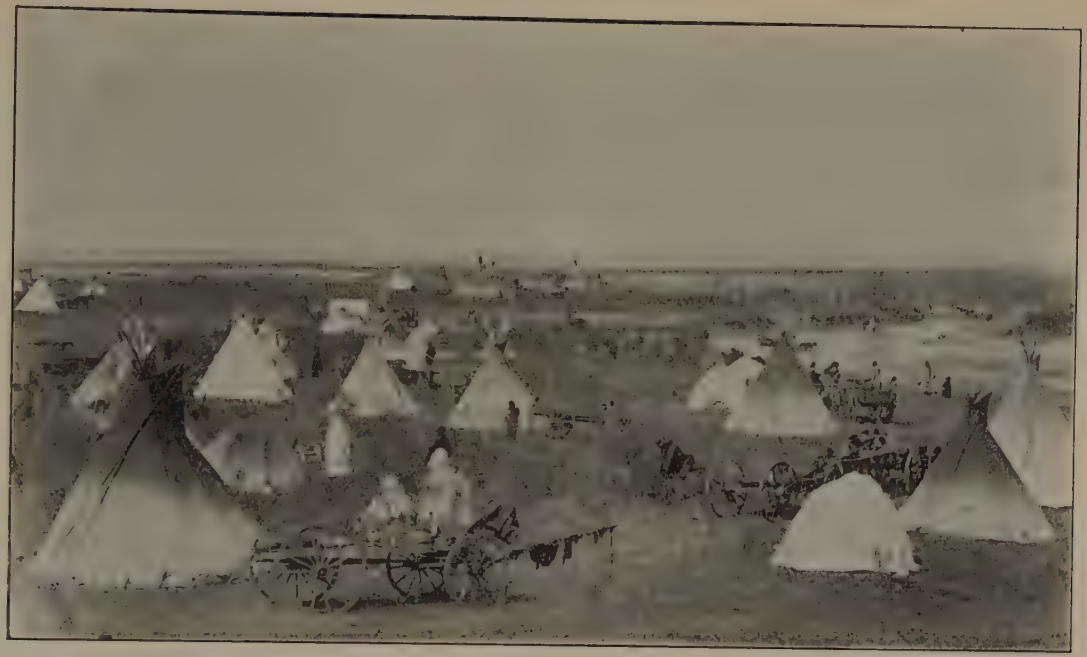
secured passes for them, and they arrived at the latter place on October 10, after an absence of just seven months. It is remarkable at what a small cost this journey was accomplished. Haury's total expense was only about 400 dollars. They had travelled over nine thousand miles.

So far as the immediate object of this journey was concerned it seemed an entire defeat, as no unoccupied, accessible field had been found. The Presbyterians were in possession of Sitka, on Kodiak the Russian church was established, and at Cook's Inlet not a sufficient number of Indians had a permanent settlement to warrant the establishment of a mission there. Soon after the return of Haury the matter, however, took an unexpected turn. A letter arrived from revenue collector Ball at Sitka, in which among other thing he says: "According to my opinion the Presbyterians will do nothing and it is not too late for you. I hope that you will return and remain." At the departure of the missionaries Ball had done all he could to persuade them to remain. He even volunteered to issue an "official request" for them to continue there, if they desired it, in order that they might justify themselves toward the Presbyterians for remaining. So too the captain of the warship "Alaska", which was stationed there at that time, said they did wrong in leaving. The doctor and the traders of Sitka had implored them to remain. Even the Indians had expressed their regret at their leaving them to go west. Under these circumstances it is natural that on receipt of the letter from Ball, Sitka was once more taken under consideration as a possible mission field.

The present state of the mission enterprise made it necessary for the Board to meet and arrange for further action. This session was held at Summerfield, November, 1879, in connection with the Western District Conference. The following is an extract of the minutes of that meeting: "In order not to act with undue haste, a letter shall be directed to revenue collector Ball at Sitka in order to ascertain whether Sitka is really occupied by missionaries. If a favorable reply is received by March 10, 1880, it is to be interpreted as an indication from the Lord that we shall begin mission work there immediately. In order to conduct ourselves with all fairness toward the Presbyterian Missionary Society our Mission Board shall inquire of the Presbyterian Board whether or not they propose to occupy Sitka; at the same time they shall be informed that in case they do not intend to do anything our Board is ready and willing to take up the work."

That no time might be wasted, it was decided that while these other correspondences were being carried on, the Board should plan and arrange for establishing a mission station in the Indian Territory, so this work might, if desired, be taken up without further delay. The necessary correspondence in these matters the Board put in charge of Haury. In the event that the report from Alaska should prove unfavorable, it was arranged that after March 10, 1880, a committee composed of Chr. Krehbiel, Henry Richert and D. Goerz should visit the Indian Territory, there to select the future mission field.

During the session of the Mission Board, Haury had been married to Susie L. Hirschler, and for the present



Indian Camp in Oklahoma.

they made their home at Summerfield. After conclusion of the session Haury immediately entered upon the correspondence assigned to him. From the Presbyterian Board a reply was received in December in which it was claimed they now had a missionary at Sitka and that they proposed even to increase the force there. In January of 1880, reply also came from Mr. Ball of Sitka. In his communication he described the situation as very favorable for the Mennonites. However in view of the communication received directly from the Presbyterian Board, it did not appear permissible to the Conference Mission Board to establish a Mission station in Alaska. Alaska was therefore dropped from the list of prospective fields. This was more readily done because of the inviting opportunity which now again presented itself among the Arapahoes. Indian agent Miles (a Quaker), stationed at Darlington, had sent word that his denomination proposed to confine their labors to the Cheyenne tribe, which would leave the field open among the Arapahoes. Not only did he give this information, but he urgently invited the Mennonites to occupy this field through Haury.

In accordance with the resolution of the Board the appointed investigation committee, accompanied by Haury, went to the Indian Territory in April, 1880, and there visited the Arapahoe tribe. The result of the consultation with agent Miles was highly satisfactory. Everything was found as represented in his writing. He now further volunteered to use his authority and influence in favor of this undertaking. He already at this time promised Haury a house which he might occupy until buildings for the mission could be erected. He fully

Arapahoe Family at Geary, Okl., in typical every day appearance.

endorsed Haury's special plans for conducting the mission work; for example the establishment of a mission industrial school, and in this direction volunteered to assist in securing the necessary permission from the government.

The committee was very favorably impressed with regard to the whole situation. With satisfaction it was observed that Haury was welcomed as an old friend both by the government officials and by the Indians. Among other expressions of joy at meeting him again an old Indian Chief by the name of Big Mouth embraced Haury with a tenderness which quite surprised the spectators. The impressions received in the Indian camps and at the agency were such as favorably disposed them toward the establishment of an Arapahoe Mission and consequently to recommend this course to the Mission Board.

As could be expected the Board decided to engage at once in mission work among the Arapahoe tribe of Indians. Matters now moved rapidly forward. On May 18, 1880, Haury and his young wife left Halstead, Kansas, in a light spring wagon, drawn by two ponies, and after a four days journey they arrived at Darlington, Indian Territory. They were very kindly received by agent Miles and his amiable wife and for a time had their lodging in the agent's home. The first work Haury did was to fit up for occupation the little government house, granted for present use, by cleaning and whitewashing it. On May 29, they moved into this house, but as their furniture and other household goods had not yet arrived, they had to live in very simple fashion for a while. For seats and tables they used store-boxes. The bed was spread on the floor. A few weeks later the furniture arrived after which they could live comfortably in their three-roomed house.

Missionary activity was entered upon at once, in that Haury and his wife gave religious instruction to the children in Sunday school and the week day school, while on Sunday afternoons meetings were held for the older Indians. More than this could not be done at the out-set, as much of Haury's time was necessarily occupied with providing indispensable equipments. For this reason Haury soon requested of the Board that an assistant be sent who should relieve him of the manual labor, and so enable him to attend to that interest for which he was there. To this the Board consented and sent Cornelius Duerksen, who arrived at Darlington in September of 1880. By this time the Board had already decided on building a mission house and had secured the consent of

the government. As then no railroad ran near Darlington, it was necessary to secure much of the building material from the raw condition. Trees must be cut down, hauled and sawed into lumber; stone must be quarried and hauled, lime burnt, and other heavy work must be performed. In all this work Haury assisted in person, in addition to carrying on the study of the Arapahoe language. He made some progress in this study, but it was soon discovered that the acquisition of that language was a greater task than had been anticipated. All along as much missionary work as possible was done. On Sundays particular attention was paid to this, but more or less was done throughout the week as opportunity offered.

When spring approached, the building material was ready. A lively interest was at this time taken by the churches in the mission, when therefore the Board issued a request for volunteers to assist in the construction of the building without pay, several persons responded. Especially valuable service was thus rendered by Jacob Kirchhofer, a carpenter by trade, who took charge of the erection of the building.

The building was completed in August, 1881. It was a wooden structure, costing about four thousand dollars, and was large enough to accommodate the missionary family and helpers, and about twenty-five Indian children. On the twelfth of August the mission workers occupied the house, greatly rejoicing that the Lord had blessed their efforts and that now at last they had a foothold. They hoped hereafter to be in position to carry forward the mission work under more advantageous conditions. The plan was now to receive Indian chil-

dren into the family, to give them a christian training, and if possible to win them for the Savior. At the same time these children should also be trained for practical life, so as to enable them to secure their own livlihood under the conditions of modern civilization.

While the building was in process of erection, Haury never felt quite sure that the Indians would voluntarily commit any of their children to his care, but at the opening of the school in September, the mission workers had the pleasure of receiving seven boys from ten to eighteen years old. This number was soon increased by further additions. Previous to this Haury had taken several small children into his care. The first one received was Jenny, a winsome little orphan girl. This little child Haury had taken with him to Kansas and there had exhibited her to the visitors of the General Conference. Thus the mission work had at last been entered upon under an auspicious beginning auguring well for the future.

But the Lord sometimes cancels the plans and shatters the hopes of men. The young mission work was about to be severely tried. On the evening of February 19, 1882, while evening services were being conducted, fire broke out upstairs, and a few hours later a smoking heap marked the place where the mission house had stood. What had been gained by much toil and expense, was in a few short hours consumed by the flames and with it much of the personal effects of the occupants. Yes, the loss was greater still. Four of the small children, among them Jenny, and Karl, the infant son of Mr. and Mrs. Haury, had been suffocated by the gas. It was an awful experience which cut to the quick to be

deprived of all thus suddenly and in such a dreadful manner.

Of that awful night a vivid description was given by Mrs. Haury, which is here inserted and reads as follows :

"My dear Friend Mrs. Krehbiel :—You have heard of our awful loss, but likely you have not learnt any of the particulars.

"On that unfortunate evening (Sunday, February 19,) at about quarter before seven, I took the four smaller ones, Karl, Jenny, Emil and Walter to bed. The larger ones prayed the little evening prayer :

"Now I lay me down to sleep;
I pray the Lord my soul to keep.
If I should die before I wake,
I pray the Lord my soul to take.

"Karl sat in my lap for a few minutes, as we played with him. Then after having nursed him, I took him to bed also. Between our sitting room and bed room there was a wardrobe, through which, however, we always passed (it having two doors). The inner door I left open, the outer door I closed, and remarked to Samuel (her husband) that there was a little smoke in the room, something which had never happened before. Yet we were not alarmed at this, as the chimneys, particularly the one on the south side, often smoked so badly that we could not stay in the rooms. I then went to the school room, sang and played on the organ for a little while. At half past seven Samuel came from up-stairs and rang for evening devotion. This exercise lasted at most for half an hour. I then called the girls to bring them to bed.—Just then Samuel saw a spark flying past the east window, then another, and another. Thinking of fire,

he rushed to the east door; the whole yard was lit up, the south end of the house was enveloped in flames. Samuel immediately dashed upstairs to the sitting room, opened the door, but was met by such a column of gas and smoke that it was almost impossible for him to go forward. The lamp which he had set on the table was extinguished by the gas. Nevertheless he went to the bed room door, but found this locked from inside; the night latch must have closed some way. He hurried down stairs, called for an axe, seized the lamp in the school room and quickly went up again. As the lamp was again extinguished, he threw this down and endeavored to break open the door. I now went down and got a lamp from Duerksen's room, and when I returned, Samuel had already succeeded in forcing the door (with his body). He hastened into the room, snatched up our little one from his bed, and feeling his strength gave way, he yet made another effort, came and placed our darling in my arms - dead. He immediately hurried back and also brought Jenny out. By this time many people had come. Some one took Jenny. Samuel called for help, as he felt unable to enter twice more. Duerksen took Emil at the door. Samuel entered the fourth time, took up Walter, and just as he came out, the flames burst through the wardrobe.

"The four children had been rescued from the flames, but two of these had already passed away. We, however, did not know of Jenny's death until after midnight, when she was brought to the house where we women were with Karl and Emil. Efforts were made to revive the children, they were all like dead. All efforts to revive Karl were in vain, but Emil and Walter were

partially revived, but only to pass away also after suffering for twenty-four hours.

"Now all that we had on this earth had been taken from us, even the children whom we so longed to keep. But the Lord who has wounded can heal us again; in Him do we trust. He has supplied our wants thus far and we rest in the confidence that he will care for us in the future.

"On Tuesday afternoon furneral services were conducted here in the government school. After that Mr. Hauser (Emil's Father) took Emil away to the Fort (Fort Reno), where he was buried on the following day. The other three were interred in the new cemetery northeast of the agency.

"Through the kindness and helpfulness of the people here we are for the present supplied with clothing and shelter, until we shall again have our own home.— Here I wish in particular to express my heartfelt thanks for the things which you (the Halstead, Kan., sewing society) have sent us through brother Krehbiel and Richert; these things have proven a great help to us just now.

"I have now related to you the events of that awful night, but it is impossible to bring these before you as they were—pen and words are unable to do that. Something like that must be experienced in order to be able to form an adequate conception of it."

On the loss occasioned by the fire Haury reported as follows: "So far as the material loss is concerned it can be reported that some of the mission property has been saved, but very little. Duerksen's and Wedel's effects are nearly if not all saved. My sister-in-law res-

cued her child but nothing else. The child suffered but little from the gas, but the fright and the exposure to the cold seem to have harmed it. Its mother could not even save a dress for it, but the evening was cold, a raw wind driving the snow.

"Now as to ourselves; practically nothing is left us. The Lord has deprived us of our things and our children. Of my books some were saved; besides these only the organ. . . . Neither my wife nor I had shoes or hat left to wear."

Being notified by telegraph of the disaster, Chr. Krehbiel, taking H. Richert with him, hastened to Darlington and found the missionary workers greatly distressed, yet bearing their sore trial with quiet submission. The house was totally destroyed. Nothing, not even the foundation could be used again. The question now was—what next? This had been a discouraging experience, ought not perhaps the work be abandoned? That course would not be in accordance with the bold character of the president of the Mission Board. Often before his boldness had secured benefits to the general cause, and so here. Undismayed by the crushing blow the work had received, Krehbiel began, as soon as he was fully acquainted with the situation, to plan for the continuation of the enterprise, endeavoring to prevent an entire stand-still, even though the work had been temporarily interrupted. Into this plan Haury heroically entered. Upon application Major Randall, commander of Fort Reno, granted temporary use of two tents in which to conduct the school for the present. The wash-house was to be transformed into a dwelling for Haury, while the loft in the stable was appointed as sleeping

place for the school boys and others. It was expected that in this manner, though ever so crude, the school could be continued until a new house would be erected, and that thus no vantage ground already gained would be lost. For to rebuild—upon that it was agreed then and there. The mission work entered upon should not be abandoned but should go forward.

However the final action with regard to this must be taken by the whole Mission Board. This body held a special session in March, at which time the purpose to rebuild, and that at once, was approved. A brick building to cost about 4500 dollars was decided upon. But there was no money in the treasury for the execution of this purpose; this must first be contributed by the churches. Although only a year ago the money had been raised for the first building, the call for contributions was met with a hearty response and within a few months over 5000 dollars were in the mission treasury; the churches thus endorsed the purpose to go forward.—Rebuilding could begin at once.

When work on the new building had already been begun, something occurred which gave a new turn to the mission enterprise. Through agent Miles Haury's attention was called to the fact that Fort Cantonment, situated about sixty miles north-west of Darlington, would be abandoned by the government. He pointed out that, as the most prominent Arapahoe Chiefs had their camps in that vicinity, it would be wise to establish an additional mission station at that point, and that this could be easily done as the vacated government buildings could be used by the missionaries free of charge. For such an additional undertaking the Board was at first

not very enthusiastic; they did not see where the funds should come from to equip and maintain a second station; indeed they felt they had enough to do to rebuild at Darlington and get that station upon a solid footing. But very unexpected and entirely unsolicited this proposed departure received substantial encouragement from the goverment which turned the scale in favor of Cantonment. Agent Miles was making good his promises. For it was at his request that the government appropriated 5000 dollars toward the new mission building at Darlington, the government to have ownership in the building to that extent. By this unforeseen but welcome turn enough money remained in the hands of the Mission Board to establish a new station. The Board was the more ready to begin this new station, because after studying the situation, it was already then foreseen that Cantonment would very naturally serve as the center for more extended mission work in the future, while Darlington would ultimately become a side station. Thus recognizing God's own guiding hand in this matter the work in Cantonment was promptly and courageously undertaken. On October 2, 1882, the military vacated Cantonment and a few weeks later H. R. Voth,[1] who had been received into the mission service by the Board, was sent to the Fort by agent Miles, there to keep a watchful eye on the property left there, while negotiations were pending for the transfer of the Fort to the Mennonite Mission. On December 1, 1882, information was received that all the buildings[2] in Cantonment, one

[1] See Biographical Appendix.

[2] The buildings in Cantonment consisted mostly of one-story palisade houses. There were twenty-five of these of different sizes;

excepted, had been transferred from the Department of the Interior to the Mission. That the government thus favored the Mennonite Mission was due on the one hand to the noble christianity of agent Miles, and on the other hand to Haury, who had the full confidence and respect of Miles as also of the government.

Darlington, Oklahoma, Mission Station.

The building in Darlington progressed rapidly and by the close of the year 1881 it was ready for occupation. The house consumed by the flames in spring was now replaced by a better and larger one. Instead of twenty-five, fifty children could now be comfortably housed and

some being very large. There were two brick buildings, the hospital and the bakery. See article by H. R. Voth in Bundesbote January 15, 1883.

cared for. The disaster of ten months ago had not only not resulted in abandonment of, or retrenchment in the work, but on the contrary, the Lord had used this trial for the more rapid extension of the mission enterprise. Besides the better and larger quarters at Darlington there was now another promising station at Cantonment. Nor was this all. A number of additional mission workers had been secured during the year. Among these were C. H. Wedel, H. R. Voth, A. E. Funk, O. S. Schultz and others. On christmas of that year the number of workers in the field was fourteen. Evidently the mission work was in a prosperous condition at this time so far as facilities and forces were concerned. So the new year could be entered with gratitude toward God and with bright hopes for the future.

In order that the occupation of Cantonment might be most advantageously effected, it was deemed advisable that the Board visit the place, there personally to study the situation. With the exception of A. B. Shelly all members of the Board visited Cantonment in February, 1883. After careful inspection and due deliberation it was decided that Haury, who desired this, should occupy Cantonment, while Darlington was put in charge of H. R. Voth. The superintendency of both stations was delegated to Haury. It was Haury's intention to establish an Indian colony in Cantonment by settling as many Indian families there as could be induced to do this. In addition to doing spiritual work among these, Haury purposed to instruct and train them industrially. This plan received the approval of the Board. As it seemed certain that the region about Cantonment was too dry for agricultural pursuits, the Board appropriated one

thousand dollars for the purchase of a cattle herd in the interest of the mission. On the one hand the gain from this herd should go to support the mission. On the other hand it was intended to offer opportunity through it for Indians to get a start in cattle raising, and thus learn to support themselves. At that time the Board also adopted a set of regulations[1] with regard to the superintendency of the mission, as also for the stewards and teachers.

The resolutions adopted here were followed. Haury soon afterwards moved to Cantonment and began to make arrangements for the reception of children and the opening of a school. He also endeavored to induce Indian families to settle permanently at the station. H. R. Voth took charge of the Darlington station. Having been accepted as missionary by the Board, he was ordained as a missionary and minister by Chr. Krehbiel, in the Alexanderwohl church on July 22, 1883. His instructions were to devote all his time and energy to mission work among the old Indians; while upon others should rest the responsibility for the school and other affairs. When the time for opening school came in the fall of 1883, it was for the first time that the missionaries could invite the children to "come, for all is ready." Accurately speaking it is the year 1883 that marks the beginning of the missionary labors among the Indians. The schools had a good attendance from the beginning. Darlington began with twenty-eight, Cantonment with twenty-three children. Later the attendance was greatly increased. At last the mission work was in operation. What had been aimed at through so many years of trial

[1] See Bundesbote April 1, 1883.

and delay was now successfully realized. The Mennonite denomination was at last also permitted to participate in the proclamation of the glad tidings to the benighted heathen.

In addition to educational efforts among the children and camp visits among old Indians, another form of missionary activity was entered upon through the inventive and undertaking genius of Chr. Krehbiel; namely the placing of Indian youths in christian families in Kansas. The purpose of doing this was to bring these young Indians in touch with christian family life, and to give them an opportunity to become acquainted with christianity by a closer daily association with christians. Then, secondarily, the purpose was to give them an opportunity to acquire valuable information and skill in modern methods of agriculture; in short, that they might see and study christian civilization in the very midst of it. As early as February, 1882, Krehbiel had made a beginning in this by taking with him to his own home in Kansas a young Indian by the name of Smith. This young man had proved troublesome at the agency and had been punished at different times for insubordination. Upon Krehbiel's request the agent granted permission to take Smith outside the Territory. Smith, though forbidding in his exterior, was received into Krehbiel's family with true christian love, and remained there for a number of months. Permission was soon obtained from the Indian Commissioner through Haury to take as many boys as desired to Kansas, there to place them in good, christian families during the vacation months of July and August; and permission was further granted to thus place boys for a period of three years, if

opportunity offered. For several years in succession a number of boys spent the summer in Kansas, and a few were there on the three-year arrangement. Through the experience thus gained the way was opened for the establishment of an industrial school, later so successfully conducted by Chr. Krehbiel. What the Indian needed was not only conversion, he was in need of industrial training, and this could very successfully be offered to him in this way. It was for this reason that Haury took this course from the very beginning ; aiming to educate and train the growing generation both spiritually and industrially. An argument in favor of this method of work we have from the able pen of J. van der Smissen. He says :

"It is exceedingly difficult to effectively preach the Gospel among a people who have been weaned from all wholesome, regular work. . . . . The Indian does not think of the morrow, nor does he know anythink of the fascination the earning of an independent livlihood has for men, as the whole tribe has a sort of community of goods. . . . The government does much in a most praiseworthy manner for the literary education of the Indian ; but experience has made it clear that the civilization of these people must be accomplished in an altogether different manner. Our mission desires to enter upon the method which we consider the only correct one. Our dear mission workers desire to accustom the Indians to work, to get them to love work, to teach them the blessings of labor, and, while constantly giving them spiritual care so far as this can be done, also to train them into settled, useful citizens." The final result aimed at, christianization, was thus to be attained by

three influences exerted in the mission work. These were: 1. Education and industrial training of the children, 2. Colonization of the old Indians, 3. Evangelization of all.

In addition to these various general methods of work a special effort was made to reach the more promising young Indians and win them for Christ, and being christians to prepare them for the work and send them among their own people as missionaries. This was done by placing them in the Mennonite Academy at Halstead, Kansas, and there giving them a course of instruction similar to that given to other students. A beginning in this was made in March, 1884, when four young men were placed in that institution. These by their conduct and diligence encouraged the expectation that they would ultimately be useful as missionaries among their people.

With the government the endeavors of the mission met with full approval, as was evident from the fact that all undertakings found cordial and liberal support, and that in various ways the work was substantially encouraged. The missionaries had a good reputation among the government officials. The following case will serve as evidence of this. A certain paper had misrepresented the Mennonite mission work as also its superintendent Haury. Mr. Hauser, an officer at Fort Reno, made the following reply: "Mr. Haury does not only enjoy the highest respect of all the white people here who know him, but has also gained the confidence of the Indians and the love of the little ones placed in their care. Anyone acquainted with the Indian character knows that only he will succeed in the latter who does not only teach and preach the right, but who faithfully

practices it in his own private life. I have in my lifetime had many opportunities to observe attempts at civilizing Indians and teaching their children. Among the few that were successful and still are so, the Mennonite school in Cantonment, Indian Territory, occupies a high, in my personal estimation the highest, position. And what this school is it is through the untiring zeal and self-denying, self-giving labors of Mr. Haury."

How highly Voth was esteemed and loved by the agency officials and employes, is evidenced by the fact that at the close of the year 1883, a number of his friends at the agency made him a present of one hundred and fifty dollars as a token of appreciation of his services to them as a minister; this gift being presented to him by Agent Miles on occasion of a little gathering appointed by them for this purpose at the mission house.

That this good reputation of the mission continued to later years, as also what was thought of the work in higher government circles may be gleaned from remarks a school inspector made at the ninth annual meeting (1888) of the Indian Commission. A. B. Shelly reports these remarks as follows: "One of the speakers, who during the year past had visited the Indian Territory and inspected the various mission stations and Indian schools, spoke in words of praise of the work which our denomination carries on in Darlington and Cantonment. He said, our schools were model schools, far excelling the government schools, and closed with the remark: 'The Mennonites are doing an excellent work there'."

During the year 1884, when the mission enterprise was expanding very rapidly and was for this reason test-

Cheyenne Women ; Child in Cradle.

ing the liberality of the supporters, the cause received a substantial aid in the form of a legacy from Jacob and Mary Leisy of Summerfield. The reader will remember that Leisy, soon after the origin of the Conference movement, had donated one thousand dollars to the Conference, on condition that this money could be used as soon as the Conference should begin independent mission

Cheyenne Family. Dressed in their Best.

work. In the succeeding years he with his noble wife hed been liberal supporters of everything the Conference undertook. They also agreed together that after their decease ten thousand dollars of their estate should go to the mission cause. By this noble act the departed have not only set for themselves a beautiful monument, but they have effectively assisted the young and weak mis-

sion enterprise, and so have left an influence at work, which to this very hour is proving a blessing.

When the work was begun among the Arapahoes, a Quaker missionary labored among the Cheyennes. But in 1884 the Quakers left this field, which left the Cheyenne tribe open for the Mennonite mission. The Board received permission from the Conference to appoint a missionary to that tribe, but as no suitable person was accessible, nothing could be done in this direction at that time. However as many Cheyenne children as possible were taken into the schools, while the Arapahoe missionaries sought to spread the Gospel among this tribe also by the aid of interpreters.

Missionary work proper among old Indians could be conducted with but little success during this period. One great obstacle was the language. The missionaries had acquired enough knowledge of their language to converse with them on every day topics, but did not attain to such proficiency that they could present the Gospel to them in public address. But the main cause for this lack of success lay in the nomadic mode of life of the Indians, and the many disturbances which rendered them restless and unsettled. It was but a few years since these tribes had been forcibly transferred by the government from their former home to the Indian Territory, of course contrary to their wish. Here they were kept under strict military surveillance, which to them was the same as captivity. Can we wonder at it that they hated the whites—their oppressors! Or that they were rebellious and repelled everything originating with the palefaces! Filled thus with bitterest animosity toward the whites, they also repelled the Gospel—for

was not that the religion of their hated oppressors? Such prejudices as these the early missionaries had to encounter ; prejudices which stood like adamantine walls and baffled the first efforts at evangelization. And it was only after many years when the exasperating experiences were further removed in time and were somewhat forgotten that successful work among the Indians could reasonably be expected. Then there was the obstacle of the Indian's nomadic habits. In order that the missionary might reach the heart of these heathen he needed to be in daily touch with them for a long period of time. What was needed was a free, natural association, such as is easely secured among people who have fixed habitations. But no such association could be secured during the early years of the mission enterprise. The Indians had no fixed habitations. Perhaps a family would have its "tepee" at a certain place for a month or two. During this time the missionary possibly would become somewhat acquainted with them and gain some influence with them in spiritual matters. Then suddently his work would be interrupted, and possibly all be lost, through the removal of the family to some distant place, twenty to seventy and more miles away, to which the missionary might never come. In addition to these obstacles the work was greatly hindered by the occasional "war-path" excitements which always threw the whole tribe into such a fever that all favorable impressions which the missionaries had succeeded in making were again effaced. It was only by turning their faces to the future, by believing that the Lord would bless the labors with the young, and that, after all, general impressions would lodge with the old which would ultimately render the

whole tribe receptive for the truth, that the workers kept up courage to continue with this stoical, unyielding people.

Although the work could not be satisfactorily conducted among the old, the opportunity to labor among the children offered through the schools, were excellent. For a number of years both schools at Darlington and Cantonment had as many children attending as they could accommodate. The usual number at Darlington

School Room in Cantonment.

was about fifty, that of Cantonment about sixty-five. Hence about one hundred Indian boys and girls were constantly enjoying the beneficent religious influence and the practical training for industrial life afforded through the mission of the General Conference. The mission workers rejoiced to observe that their labors here were not altogether in vain. The seed sown was taking root more or less deeply and impressions for good were made, which promised well never to be effaced. When afterwards these children returned to

Group of School Girls at Cantonment.

their homes, they carried these impressions with them into the camps, where they would necessarily act as a leaven, working effectively toward the ultimate transformation of the whole tribe.

By experience it was found that the schools in the Indian Territory, being in the immediate vicinity of the Indian settlements, were at a disadvantage in that by

Indian Grave.

the easy and frequent touch with ordinary Indian life the influence of the schools was to a great extent counteracted. The plan was therefore hit upon to establish an industrial school far removed from the tribes. For this the temporary transfer of children to Kansas, as before stated, had paved the way. That four Indian boys were in attendance at the school in Halstead has been reported. In the fall of 1885 this arrangement had experienced an expansion.

The Mission Board had agreed with the school committee to combine an Industrial Mission School with the Kansas Conference school. The school should furnish the necessary room, while the Mission would board the students and pay the salary of the teachers, appointed conjointly by the Mission Board and the school committee.

In accordance with this agreement the school was opened with fifteen Indian boys and girls in the fall of 1885. A. S. Shelly officiated as superintendent during the first year. During the second year G. A. Haury served both as superintendent and teacher. All the young people received instruction in the ordinary branches of learning. In addition the two girls attending were trained in practical housekeeping, while the boys under Haury's direction tilled a few acres of ground. After having tried this for two years, it became apparent that it was neither wise nor profitable to have this school in town. It was also thought that the conference school was being hindered by the industrial school, because the two institutions were pursuing different aims. So it became necessary to discontinue the industrial school in its present form and connection. The

other members of the Board would have been satisfied to discontinue this particular kind of work entirely after this attempt. Not so, however, Chr. Krehbiel, the originator and promoter of the undertaking. He was convinced that the best method for preparing young Indians to meet the demands of modern civilized life was to train them in an industrial school, conducted as nearly as possible on the basis of ordinary family life. He also held that these young people could be won for Christ easier through such a touch with christian family life than in any other way. To undertake such a school was no small matter. But, desiring from his heart the welfare of the people whom the Conference had undertaken to evangelize, he resolved with the Lord's aid to carry on this work himself by removing it to his farm, located about one mile from Halstead, and assuming personally all financial risks and responsibilities. The Board was very willing to accept his proposition, and so, in April 1887, after Krehbiel had erected suitable buildings for the accommodation of the children, the "Indian Industrial School", as it was thereafter known, was removed to his farm. At the time sixteen boys and girls attended. In order to waken in them a sense for acquisition through personal effort, he permitted them to plant ten acres of ground to castor beans with the understanding that the whole yield would belong to them.

The whole work was conducted as nearly as possible on the plan of ordinary family life. During the farming season the larger boys performed all the various kinds of labor which occur in the routine of farm-life. The smaller boys were employed in the garden. Morning and evening they cared for the stock and did the differ-

Indian Industrial School.—Christian Krehbiel's Home at Halstead, Kansas.

ent chores. The girls learnt and performed all kinds of house work. In all their activities Krehbiel himself kept in personal touch with the boys and was their practical teacher; to the girls Mrs. Krehbiel was as a mother. For nine months in the year all the children of school age received instruction by a teacher employed by Krehbiel, in a school room specially built for this purpose. The government permitted children to attend this school for three successive years. This extended period of life in the school was of great advantage to the children. Removed for this long time from uncivilized surroundings, without being subjected to military exaction or slavish dependence, but instead being allowed the freedom of children in a family, these children of the red man, considering differences in former advantages, succeeded as well as those of the white man. They progressed spiritually and in practical attainments. The experiment was in every way successful.

There was one weakness from which the mission enterprise suffered from the first, namely the frequency of change in mission workers. It was a ceaseless coming and going which kept the Board in a constant dilemma how to fill the vacancies. In 1886 Haury, who had done so much toward the inauguration of independent mission work for the General Conference, also retired. His place in Cantonment was filled by J. J. Kliewer, who had for some time served as teacher.

At the session of the General Conference in 1887 the report of the Board stated with especial emphasis that mission work among the adult Indians, desired from the first, but not accomplished, ought now to be pushed more vigorously, and that efforts should not be

confined to children alone. The following is a portion of the report: "As already suggested, the Board is decidedly of the opinion that in the future we should not confine ourselves to the training of children only, but that our workers should realize it as their first duty to labor for the saving of souls of the grown people. The training of children should also receive due attention and should not be discontinued. But it is an illusion to expect that without labor upon the parents these are to be won for Christ through the children." As the Indians had by this time become more quiet and in part had fixed residences, being thereby rendered more accessible to gospel work, the time seemed to have arrived for more aggressive efforts in that direction, though even now the work had to contend with many and great obstacles.

It was about this time that missionary Kliewer felt prompted to devote himself exclusively to this special work among the adults by settling with his family in an Arapahoe Indian camp. As this accorded with the wishes of the Board, that body approved of his plan and so a third mission station was founded. About sixty miles west of Darlington and about seventy miles southwest from Cantonment, on the Washita river, there was a large Arapahoe settlement near which Kliewer desired to locate. The establishment of a station at that place was begun in July of 1889. This task involved no small hardship, but Kliewer was a man of courage and faith in God, and possessed that kind of genius which overcomes difficulties. The place selected was far away from any white settlement. Everything was still in the undisturbed condition of nature. In order to gain a foothold in that country, Kliewer, accompanied by his

brother, drove there in a covered wagon. They cut down small trees and made them into posts. Of these they then built a palisade house. This is done by setting in trenches side by side rows of posts, enclosing a space of the size and form wanted for a house. The upper ends of the posts are fastened together by laying a strip of wood over them and nailing this down to each post. This frame is now covered over with heavy sticks. On these long grass and branches are piled, and over the top of all comes a cover of earth. The cracks between the posts are closed with clay. Simple doors are put to the openings, and the house is ready for occupation.

The development of the Industrial School at Halstead and the promising prospects at the new station on the Washita did much to keep up interest in the mission work among the supporting churches. Lack of success always tends to check the flow of contributions. However the schools in the Territory were not devoid of encouraging fruits. The workers at Darlington had the great privilege of winning a soul for Christ—the first—fruits of the Mennonite mission. Maggie Leonhard, a half-blood Indian girl, was led of the spirit and through the endeavors of missionary Voth and his spiritually minded wife, to accept Christ. She soon desired to be baptized. Early in the summer of 1888, several members of the Board (A. B. Shelly, Chr. Krehbiel, Chr. Schowalter and H. Richert) were making an official visit to the mission. Among other things they arranged for the baptism, and on June third the seventeen year old Maggie was baptized by A. B. Shelly. This was the first sheave the General Conference as a missionary society was permitted to garner.

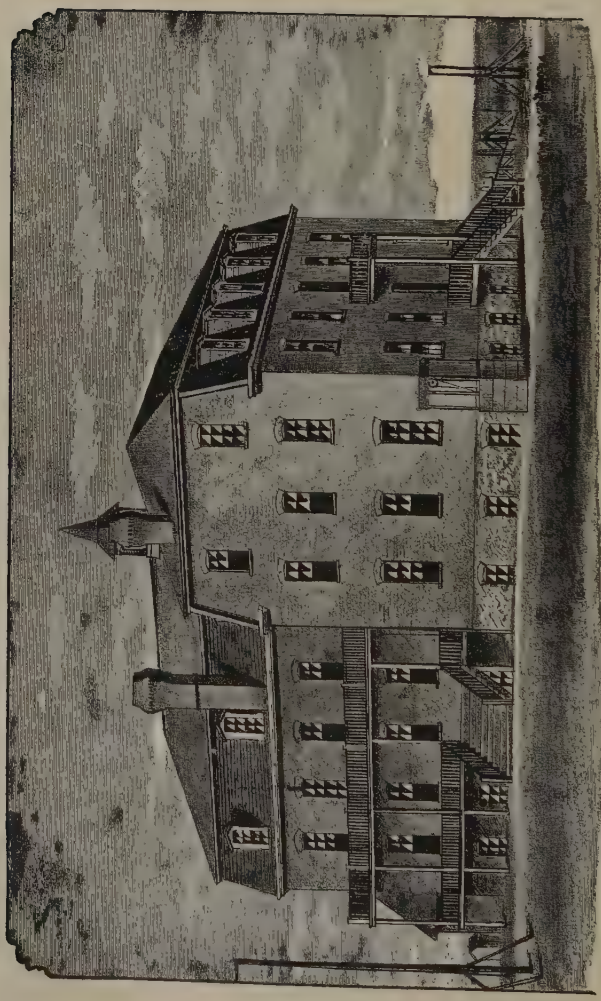
As stated in another place the buildings in Cantonment were mostly palisade structures. In the course of time most of these became unfit for dwellings, as the posts had rotted away below, the roofs leaked and some threatened to collapse. Moreover these peculiar structures for various reasons were not suitable for missionary work. It became necessary therefore to build a mission house. The committee referred to above, after careful investigation of the situation, decided to build, and that large enough to comfortably accommodate seventy-five children.

During October of that year, while visiting at Cantonment, Chr. Krehbiel, as president of the Board, had selected as site for the proposed building a pleasant elevation, situated about half a mile west of the old station. Great enthusiasm existed among the mission workers for the proposed new building. This was shown on the wedding-occasion of one of the workers, when the workers among themselves subscribed seven hundred dollars for building purposes. But nothing had as yet been done by the churches, no call for money having been issued. Chr. Krehbiel now brought the promising conditions in the mission field vividly before the minds of the people in a report of his last visit to the Territory. At the same time a request for funds for the erection of the needed building was issued by the secretary A. B. Shelly. The request was promptly responded to. Early in 1889 enough money had already been contributed to assure the Board that the amount needed would be supplied and that they were safe in beginning to build.

The erection of this building was in its line the most difficult task the Conference had so far undertaken.

Cantonment was situated seventy miles from a railroad. To haul material that distance would be very expensive. Nowhere in all that region was there any industrial development. The building material had to be collected and prepared in that vicinity. It was necessary to quarry stone, cut timber, saw lumber, burn lime, make brick, and prepare many other things, which in the states are bought ready for use. The Board, however, was fortunate in securing A. T. Kruse of Halstead, Kans., as architect, and under his able direction and by his resourceful and inventive genius all difficulties were overcome, and the beautiful brick structure was finished in the summer of 1890. In the commodious quarters of the new building seventy-five children could easily be accommodated. It was larger than the house in Darlington, but cost less, its cost being six thousand dollars. On July 6, 1890, Chr. Krehbiel, assisted by other members of the Board, dedicated the building to its special use.

It was a great loss to the mission work in general, and to Darlington in particular, when in February, 1889 Barbara Voth, wife of missionary Voth, was called away by an untimely death. She was a quiet, but very pious and spiritually minded person, and labored for her Indian charges with whole hearted devotion as well as with wisdom and tact. Under her regime a peaceful quiet rested over the whole place. Her heart was in the cause and so she won the hearts of the children whom she lovingly sought to lead to Jesus. She had also won the esteem and love of the older Indian women through genuine works of christian love. How much they had become attached to her was shown by the sympathy which they exhibited during her sickness and by their



Cantonment Mission Building. (Destroyed by Fire.)

unfeigned sorrow at her death. They wept for her as for a sister.

Not long afterwards another faithful worker was called to his reward. When in 1889 Kliewer was stationed at Washita, the Board called D. B. Hirschler to Cantonment as superintendent and missionary. Only one year had he been permitted to serve in this capacity when he was taken down with typhoid fever, to which he succumbed after a few days. The loss of such faithful laborers necessarily interfered with the successful progress of the mission work. But as the Lord himself was thus breaking the ranks, even these afflictions must in some way have served to advance his Kingdom.

About ten years had now elasped since the Conference began work among the Arapahoes. During these years civilized settlement had been steadily coming closer and closer to the formerly isolated tribes, in consequence of which new conditions had arisen which could not be ignored by the mission, but had to be reckoned with. The changed situation called for a change in means and methods. Oklahoma, which bordered on the Cheyenne and Arapahoe reservation on the east, was thrown upon to white settlement in 1889. This brought the Darlington station, which is situated within one mile of the eastern boundary, into immediate touch with the whites. Railroads also came closer. When the mission work was begun, the nearest railroad station was more than one hundred miles distant. Later a road was extended to Oklahoma City, twenty-five miles away. And in 1889 the Rock Island road came within a mile of the mission station. These

changed conditions greatly affected the whole mission work. So much that was new and distracting to the Indian was now brought to his very door and forced upon his attention that interest in the Gospel was for the present crowded out. To the mission workers themselves the opportunity to secure nice farms as a gift proved very alluring. There before their eyes stretched the nice farms which they might claim as their own by simply going over and taking them. With a number the desire for settlement became so strong that in consequence the minds were more occupied with thoughts of occupying farms than of winning souls. The outcome was that not a few, both male and female workers, took claims at the opening of Oklahoma. While it can appear only as desirable that Mennonite settlements should be situated in the immediate vicinity of the Indian's home, the manner of formation of this settlement was to the present disadvantage of the work. When the excitement, incident to the opening of Oklahoma, had died away somewhat and the work had become adjusted to the new conditions, another disturbance appeared which interfered still more with the prosecution of the mission work. In 1892 it was ordered by the general government that the Cheyenne and Arapahoe Indians should hold their land in severalty ; one quarter section to be allotted to each man, woman or child. Whatever remained after allotment should be thrown open to settlement by whites. The census and registration of the Indians which this made necessary, as also the inspection and choice of farms by the Indians, proved of such absorbing interest to the Indians and caused them to move about so much, that there was little chance for gospel work among them

for a long time. By this allotment of land the mission itself was confronted by a problem. Now that all land was to be given away to the Indians or to whites, how should the mission hold the stations already established, and how secure a foot-hold for the establishment of new stations already planned? The land on which Kliewer's station was located, and that for several others expected to be established, could not be reserved for the mission through the government, but became subject to the general homestead law. It was therefore necessary, should these places be held for mission stations, that the missionaries, just as other persons, go temporarily outside the reservation and, taking equal risks with all others, make the run for these places, and if successful, take them as homesteads in their own name; not in the name of the mission as that would invalidate the claim. In this manner the station on the Washita was taken by J. J. Kliewer, while J. S. Krehbiel homesteaded a place for a new station near the Red Hills, half way between Darlington and Cantonment.

When the Cheyenne and Arapahoe reservation was thrown open for general settlement, many thousand whites rushed in and in a few days took all the good land. Thus the mission field, instead of being far away in the wilds of the prairies, was suddenly surrounded by whites, and now is in the midst of modern civilization. Upon the Indians themselves this situation must of course exert a mighty influence. By constant touch with whites they learn much, both good and bad; the good, however, preponderating, inasmuch as most of the settlers are christians. One decided gain these altered conditions did bring; a gain to the mission, a blessing to the

J. S. Krehbiel's Home at Geary.
Mr. and Mrs. Krehbiel seated. Arapahoe Family in Front.

Indian. Namely the Indians have become more settled. The settlement interferes with the nomadic life of the Indians, and in addition the government has been trying to break up their roaming habits by compelling each Indian, together with his family, to reside on his farm during certain periods of the year, and not to leave it to make visits.

Disturbing though the accomplishment of these changes has been to the mission work, yet, through the fact that, by the conditions existing now, the Indian's civilization is hastened, it is certain that the mission gains in the end in that evangelization work becomes much easier.

That the influences of christianity and civilization have not remained without effect upon the Indian, is shown by a unique religious movement which made its

appearance among them early in the nineties. Reference is had to the "Messiah Craze" which spread among all Indians from Canada to the far south. This craze was caused by a strange mixture of gospel truths and pagan superstitions, and gained its power with the Indians from one of its leading doctrines, which was that a messiah would soon appear who would destroy the whites and restore to the Indian his hunting grounds and buffalo herds. Among the Cheyennes and Arapahoes the craze also raged for some time. Wild religious dances, sometimes lasting for weeks , were performed, by which the performers as well as the spectators worked themselves up into a great frenzy. Of course they would not listen to any gospel preaching during that time. By and by, however, when the time fixed for the appearance of the messiah came, but no messiah appeared, they quieted down and began to loose confidence in their religion as well as in their leaders. The opportunity for gospel preaching had come.

Another great change in conditions is properly recorded at this place. When the mission work was begun, all old Indians were rude and ignorant. They could neither write nor read. And almost none of them understood any English. Of the civilized mode of life of the white man they knew practically nothing. For until then they had come in touch only with the police or military side of our national life. But after these years of work through government and mission schools the situation had greatly changed. Now young men and women could everywhere be met with who fluently spoke and wrote English, who possessed no small knowledge of the world and who had to a greater or less

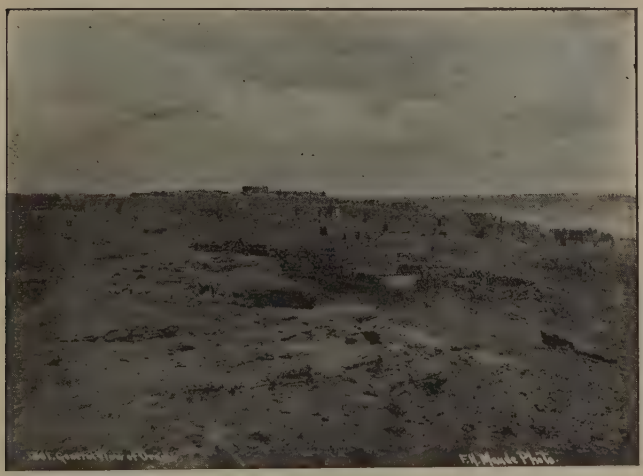
extent been touched by the ennobling influences of the christian civilization of our age. And, more important still, all these persons were acquainted with the teachings of the Bible, had received instructions in the doctrines of christianity, and efforts had been made to win their souls for Christ. Yes, many had yielded to these pleadings and had accepted Christ. Here and there in the camps were baptized young Indians, some coming from the government schools, others from the mission schools. It was unfortunate that these young people had to return to camp life without any systematic, stable support on the part of fellow Christians to sustain them in their christian life. Young and weak as they were, they were returned to their former surroundings—into the pagan as well as barbarous life led by their parents and friends. That most of these young people became lax in their religious and moral life under this severe test, cannot be surprising. Yet not all was lost. Some held to their faith in Christ more or less perfectly. Then also the way for the Gospel was prepared somewhat among the adult Indians through the telling of the Bible stories by these young people ; and undoubtedly the Messiah Craze became possible from what the old heard from the young, but imperfectly understood. Adjusting what they heard to their accustomed mode of thinking, and infusing into it their own crude notions, they obtained only a caricature of the truth. But though at first very unclear to them, it is evident that the old Indians were gradually drawing nearer to, yes, were slowly accepting the teachings of the christian religion. The time had come for energetic evangelization work among the old Indians.

As stated before the Board was fully aware that the time for missionary work among the adults had come. Through Kliewer this work had been taken up among the Arapahoes. But no suitable man had yet been found to work among the Cheyennes. Providence, however, so guided it that in 1890 the attention of the Board was directed to Rudolph Petter of Switzerland, who had just completed a course of preparation and was now ready and willing to enter the service of the Conference mission. A call was soon extended to Petter and was accepted by him. In August 1890, he arrived in America, studied English at Oberlin for one year, and toward the close of 1891 began his work as missionary. He was settled at Cantonment and was assigned to work exclusively among the adult Cheyennes in the camps. Such an arrangement was formerly impracticable, because of the undeveloped conditions. But now this could readily be done. Here was now a good house in which he could live. He could come and go whenever he chose, and everything remained in order and was cared for. Here was food, fuel and every comfort for himself and wife; here was food, shelter and care for his team. He needed not to trouble himself about any of these things. Others were here that took care of everything industrial and secular, so Petter could give his whole time, thought and energy to his special work. It proved a wise and advantageous arrangement. Petter and his wife daily visited the Indians in their camps, conversed with them, made their acquaintance, studied their language and sought to enter their mode of thought. Their meals they got at the mission house, and here also they spent their nights. Under these favorable circumstances, not

offered to any of the workers before, they were enabled to make rapid progress in the acquisition of the Cheyenne language, and to approach the Indians more closely spiritually. This approach was something new to the Cheyennes, and they gladly welcomed it. Here and there a heart began to inquire for truth and light. It seemed that the time of redemption of this people had come, and in some of the churches no small hopes were entertained that the new departure in mission work would result in the speedy conversion of the tribe.

When H. R. Voth had been in the mission service for ten years, he applied for a six month's vacation. This was granted him. His place as superintendent of the mission was filled by temporarily calling J. S. Krehbiel to this position, he entering upon his work in November of 1891. About this time an urgent appeal came to the Mission Board from Arizona to open a mission among the aboriginal mountain inhabitants in that section. It was through Peter Stauffer that attention was directed to Arizona. Stauffer had formerly been in the mission service in the Indian Territory. Indian agent Collins had there made his acquaintance and secured his services for the government school. When later on agent Collins was transferred to Arizona, he persuaded Stauffer to go with him. There Stauffer came in touch with the mountain inhabitants, and being a sincere christian he greatly longed that some one might preach the Gospel to these people. Accordingly he wrote to the Board in April 1891, described the conditions and situation, pictured the people as open to Gospel work and urged that the work might be begun by the Conference Mission. At first this appeal was

left unheeded, because it was feared that neither means nor men would be available for such additional work. But the appeal was repeated several times and with increased urgency, until at last the Board believed it their duty to yield to it. As the mission work in the Indian Territory moved along harmoniously and prosperously under the superintendency of J. S. Krehbiel, it was decided to entrust this position to him per-



Oraibe.

manently, while H. R. Voth with his ripe experience was selected for opening the new field in Arizona. However before settling this matter definitely it was thought best to subject the field to a personal inspection. Accordingly Chr. Krehbiel, president of the Board, accompanied by missionary Voth, made a tour to the prospective field in November 1892. The highly

Street and House in Oraibe, Arizona.

Interior of a Moki House.

Oraibe (Moki) Girls.

Oraibe (Moki) Men.

Mr. and Mrs. H. R. Voth and daughter Frieda.

interesting experiences and observations made on this trip were described at that time in the Bundesbote. A description of that remarkable people and their strange dwellings and mode of life can not be entered upon here. But it is proper to note at this place that those mountain inhabitants differ entirely from the Indians of the plains and forests. They are a different race. They have fixed habitations, cultivate the soil and raise stock. In spinning and weaving they possess no small skill. They manufacture their own pottery and in many respects ex-

hibit a high degree of intelligence and susceptibility for civilization. The impression with regard to establishing a mission among this people was very favorable upon both Krehbiel and Voth. The result was that the Board decided to station a missionary there. In July 1893 Voth, who had recently married again, went to Arizona with his wife and daughter Frieda, and under many hardships

Missionary Voth's Home, Craibe, Arizona

endeavored to establish himself in that wild and mountainous coutry. He from the outset began to study the language of the people, to familiarize himself with their mode of life, to gain their confidence and to win their souls for Christ.

Before the work was begun in Arizona, the mission was once more severely tried by fire. This time Cantonment was the scene of conflagration. As usual the school was filled with children. Under the management of. A.

S. Voth the work was moving along nicely, when on February 1, 1893, during a severe snowstorm, it was abruptly terminated by fire. It broke out in a room upstairs, and, baffling all attempts to extinguish it, it rapidly spread and in a few hours had reduced the beautiful structure to a smoking ruin. Fortunately no lives were lost. As the fire occurred during the daytime, all children were easely removed beyond danger. As soon as the mission workers had recovered somewhat from the awful shock, they notified Chr. Krehbiel of the disaster by telegraph. To him as to the whole Conference this was distressing news. But he quickly rose to the occasion, and notwithstanding the inclemency of a bitterly cold winter day and unmindful of his advanced years, he hastened to reach the scene of disaster. Going by way of Darlington he faced a northwestern blizzard for sixty miles and, thoroughly chilled, arrived at Cantonment scarcely two days after the fire. He found as was reported that the building was entirely ruined. In his report he writes of the impressions made upon him, as follows: "Oh! what a sad sight these ruins present in comparison to the magnificient building as it once stood here in its grand completeness! With deep emotion I saw here destroyed what had cost many years of labor and much anxiety and thought."

The mission workers had temporarily found shelter near by in the homes of the kindly government employees. The school was necessarily discontinued and the children were dismissed until it should be decided what next to do. Yes, that was the perplexing question —what next? Shall this school be entirely abandonded? All were reluctant to do this. But where secure the

funds for rebuilding? It was but two years since the churches had with praiseworthy liberality supplied the money for the building now in ruins. But it had been a strain upon them. Now the country was troubled by hard times, reducing many to a struggle for their own maintainance. Moreover, increased demands had lately been made upon the churches to enable the Board to take up the work in Arizona. The situation was perplexing. Timid natures would under these circumstances have counselled retrenchment or perhaps abandonment. But such thoughts were foreign to the mind of Chr. Krehbiel. He believed that this sore trial was sent of God not in order to destroy the work but to improve it. He also had the confidence in the churches that if the situation should be fully and clearly presented to them that they would not permit any retrogression, but would in due time furnish the means to restore the loss. Believing that this would be the case he, with characteristic boldness in undertakings, made plans for the reconstruction of the building before he left Cantonment, and then published these together with a clear presentation of the situation as affecting the whole mission enterprise. In April the Board held a session for the consideration of the matter. The result was the decision to build. However the building was to be undertaken only after the churches, upon presentation of the matter, should have expressed their willingness to supply the necessary means. The matter was presented to the churches about the middle of May, and by June eighth it could already be announced that 2800 dollars had been subscribed for rebuilding. By this prompt and liberal response the Board felt encouraged to proceed.

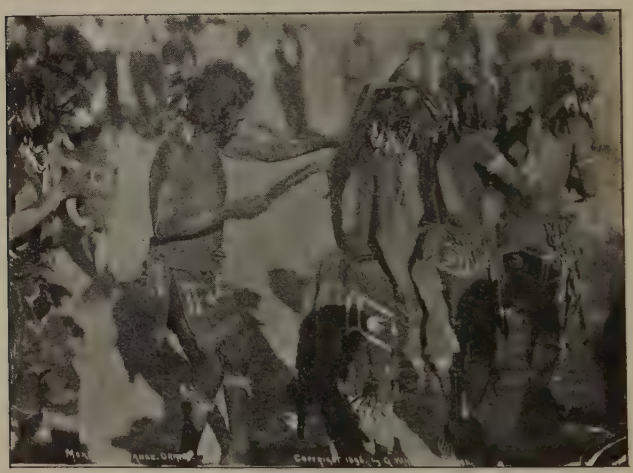
The business conected with building was put in charge of superintendent J. S. Krehbiel. H. L. Weiss had charge of the architectural part. By November the new building was ready for occupation. It is of wood, stands on the old foundation, but is only two stories high. It accommodates forty children and costs about five thousand dollars. Without any urging on the part of the Board, the hearts of the people had been made willing gladly to supply sufficient means to complete the building. Thus, though severely tried, the work was enabled to go on without retrogression.

Moki Katcina Dance.

The opening of the new mission field was greatly assisted by aid, which was rendered by three ladies missionary societies of the east, namely the Woman's Indian Association of New Jersey, The Philadelphia Women's Association, and the Delaware Indian Association. The first of these contributed seven hundred dol-

Present Cantonment School Building.

lars toward Voth's salary for the first year. The second donated five hundred dollars toward a home for the missionary, and the last society promised a donation for the erection of a chapel. The Mokis, among whom Voth labors, have their home in the north eastern part of Arizona. Oraibe, the Indian village, is situated about seventy miles from the nearest railroad station. These



Moki Snake Dance.

people live in villages high up among the bare rocks of the mountains. Voth built his modest little house below in the valley, and from there climbs the mountain to labor among his charge. He has already gained considerable knowledge of their language, tells the people in their own language of Jesus Christ their Savior, helps them by word and deed in temporal matters, and with his family is to them a living example of what he teaches. As yet these people adhere to their traditional

A Moki Priest.

religion. Patience and faithfulness in the work are still demanded, until to the joy of all the Lord in his own time will there also reap his harvest.

Christmas at the Moki Mission Station.

If the result of mission work is to be measured by the number and thoroughness of conversions, very little result can as yet be shown among the Arapahoes and Cheyennes. For a time it seemed that the labors of Petter among the adults would lead to general conversions. But those hopes have so far not been realized. Nevertheless there is now better prospect for the ultimate acceptance of Christianity by both tribes than ever before. The Indians as a whole appear to be gradually coming nearer to christianity, and when the proper time has come, they will very probably accept christianity in large numbers, perhaps by tribes. For this reason it behooves the conference mission to compose her soul in patience and continue her work in hope. The time of a bountiful harvest is coming.

But entirely fruitless the work has by no means been. For through the spiritual labors among the children in the schools a number have come to the knowledge of the truth, have submitted themselves to the Lord and upon their confession of faith in Jesus Christ have been baptized. Several conversions have occurred in the mission schools in the Territory, but the best results in this direction were attained in the Industrial School in Kansas. Some of the young men and women that went forth as converts from the different schools later became cold and indifferent, but it is doubtful whether there would have been less back-sliding, had so many white young men and women been subjected to similarly disadvantageous conditions as were these young Indian christians. Young christians need the care and support of christian surroundings—of the church, the christian home and community. This fact has for many years been recognized

by the Board and the workers. But it is only within most recent times that anything definite is being done to come to the Indian christians' aid. The means now employed is the organization of converted Indians into churches. Two churches are now organized, one by missionary Petter, the members being Cheyenne Indians, the other by missionary Funk, the members being Arapahoe Indians. The members of the latter are missionary J. A. Funk and wife, Lizzie Raven, Ella Stander, Laura Sage, Minnie Arrow and Philip Rabbit. This organization was effected on October 28, 1897. A few months later the Cheyenne church was organized by Petter, the following Indians uniting with it: Kaowess and Mrs. Todd (two adult Cheyennes), Mary Todd, Charley Roman Nose and Olympia Lone Wolf. Into these organizations the missionaries of course expect to receive others of the younger and older Indians as they accept Christ and are baptized. Undoubtedly these churches will prove useful means to support those who do profess Christ in their christian life. In this direction the Mennonite churches organized at Geary by J. S. Krehbiel, and at Shelly (formerly Washita) by J. J. Kliewer, will also be helps to the converted Arapahoe Indians. Several Indians are now members of the church at Geary, and by this christian fellowship are strengthened and supported.

The financial panic and accompanying stringent times of 1892 to 1896, by which almost all missionary and philanthropic societies were plunged deeply into debt and compelled to retrench, likewise brought the General Conference mission into no small perplexity. The contributions were greatly reduced, but of course the

current expenses remained about the same. The Board was firmly resolved to make no debts ; they would rather retrench at once. When it became known to the missionaries that the Board was in financial straits, a praiseworthy spirit of self-denial was manifested by some of the missionaries. J. J. Kliewer and J. S. Krehbiel donated a large part of their salaries in order to relieve the pressure upon the mission treasury ; and H. R. Voth later did the same. But this brought temporary relief only ; ends could still not be made to meet. The Board

Mission Chapel at Cantonment.

finally appealed to the churches and explained, that unless contributions would increase, it would be necessary to retrench, which, however, would result in the sacrifice of several important positions. Be it said to the honor of the churches that they were neither willing to make debts nor to retrench. For notwithstanding the hard times they again supplied enough money that the work could go forward clear of debt and without retrenchment. They did more. For several years a need

had been felt for small chapels, in which to hold services with the Indians. This need became more and more pressing, and finally through the reports of the missionaries came to the attention of the churches. Without any request whatever having been made, donations began to be made for chapels. It was not very long before enough had been contributed for the erection of a chapel at Washita for Kliewer and one at Cantonment for Petter.

Mission Chapel at Geary, Oklahoma.

A chapel was also needed at the new station at Geary (formerly Red Hills). This Chr. Krehbiel built of his own means and granted the use of it to the mission.

The Indians selected their lands in such a manner that they came to be settled in groups. The largest of these groups were at Cantonment, Washita and Geary. But at several other places there were settlements of con-

siderable size. As these could not well be cared for from the other stations, it was found necessary to establish new stations. One was located at Dyke, twelve miles east of Cantonment, and put in charge of A. S. Voth. But as Voth was later needed at Darlington, this station was not continued. Another station was located near the town of Arapahoe, twenty-five miles northwest of Kliewer's station and also situated on the Washita River. This station was put in charge of missionary M. M. Horsch. For the establishment of these stations special donations had been received. Among the donors may be mentioned in particular Gerhard and Katherine Vogt of Summerfield, Illinois, who gave five hundred dollars for this purpose; and Mary Stauffer of Metuchen, New Jersey, who gave one hundred dollars.

Since the Conference began to do mission work, a number of changes have occurred in the membership of the Board to whom this work is entrusted. Several persons, however, have served all or the greater part of this time, and to the wisdom and courage of these men in particular, under the blessing and guidance of God, the development and growth of the mission enterprise is due. The accompanying list exhibits the composition of the Board for every triennial period.

For twenty-four years Chr. Krehbiel served in the responsible position of President of the Mission Board. His varied talents, his energy, his power as a leader, his business ability, his love for the cause,—all combined to render him highly qualified for this position, and he lent himself willingly, devoting the best years of his life to the work. He studied its needs, devised ways and means for

Period.	*President.*	*Secretary.*	*Members.*	*Treasurer.*
1872—75.	Chr. Krehbiel	C. J. v. d. Smissen	A. B. Shelly, Chr. Schowalter, J. H. Oberholzer	Dan. Krehbiel.
1875—78..	"	"	" " "	"
1878—81..	"	"	" " "	"
1881—84..	"	"	A. B. Shelly, Chr. Schowalter, H. Richert, S. F. Sprunger, A. E Funk	H. Sudermann.
1884—87..	"	"	A. B. Shelly, Chr. Schowalter, H. Richert, S. F. Sprunger, J. S. Moyer	"
1887—90..	"	"	A. B. Shelly, Chr. Schowalter, H. Richert, Jac. Toews, J. S. Moyer	"
1890—93..	"	A. B. Shelly	C. H. A. van der Smissen, Chr. Schowalter, H. Richert, G. Harder, J. S. Moyer	"
1893—96..	"	"	C. H. A. van der Smissen, Chr. Schowalter, W. S. Gottschall, D. Gaeddert, B. Eicher	G. Harder.
1896—99..	Chr. Schowalter	"	S. F. Sprunger, G. Harder, P. Balzer, M. S. Moyer.	"

Mission Board. Time of service of the different Members.

strengthening and further expanding it. Through frequent visits to the field and personal observation of the work he was thoroughly conversant at all times with existing conditions, and succeeded in remaining in closest touch with the work. In him all workers, whether missionaries, teachers, stewards, or hired girls found a wise, able and sympathetic counsellor. If the cause met with difficulties, he boldly confronted the situation and always found the way out. Extraordinarily gifted with power to make plans and to find ways and means for their execution, the mission gained much from him in this direction, and undoubtedly the growth and success of the mission work is to a large extent due to his genius and devotion.

Until shortly before his death, C. J. van der Smissen served as secretary of the Board. As such it devolved largely upon him to keep the churches posted on the work. His knowledge of missionary history as well as his education in general, together with his deep love for the cause, rendered him particularly qualified for this position. Through his correspondences and as editor of the Mission paper, "Nachrichten aus der Heidenwelt," he has done invaluable service in awakening and keeping alive the missionary spirit among the churches.

After van der Smissen's decease A. B. Shelly succeeded him as secretary, and as such is doing good service for the mission by his sound views on all matters, and by his stimulating writings as missionary correspondent to both the "Mennonite" and "Bundesbote."

Previous to 1896 the mission treasurer was not a member of the Board. Different persons have served in

that capacity. From 1872 to 1881 Daniel Krehbiel held this often troublesome and financially responsible position. He was succeeded by H. Sudermann, Sr., who served until his death which occurred in 1892. His son H. Sudermann, Jr., was appointed to fill the place until the following conference session, at which G. Harder was elected. Though this office in the discharge of its duties requires much work, is often annoying, and has attached to it no small financial responsibility, no compensation attaches to it. The Conference may well consider itself fortunate in possessing such competent, unselfish men, who are willing to give their time and credit gratuitously.

The Indian Industrial School in care of Chr. Krehbiel at Halstead, Kansas, was continued to the entire satisfaction of the government and the great blessing of the children until the summer of 1896. In that year all the contract schools were discontinued by act of Congress. As no exception could be made, this school, after a successful career of eleven years, had to be discontinued.

The station at Geary still continues, but not under the direction of the Board. J. S. Krehbiel, after serving successfully for five years as superintendent of the mission stations, resigned, and though the Board desired him to continue in the mission service, he severed his connection, but continues still to labor among the Arapahoes in full sympathy with the conference mission and its workers, while at the same time he serves as pastor of a Mennonite church, organized at that place and composed of a mixed membership of a few Indians and a number of Mennonites who have settled there.

The Conference has at present five stations at which

mission work is carried on, of which four are in Oklahoma, as follows: 1. Darlington, 2. Cantonment, 3. Shelly (formerly Washita), 4. Arapahoe; and one is in Arizona. The station Shelly is, however, probably soon to assume the same relation to the mission as the one at Geary. Darlington may also be dropped from the list. The following missionaries are employed at present (1897): H. R. Voth in Arizona, in Oklahoma R. Petter, J. J. Kliewer, M; M. Horsch, and John Funk. The total number of workers in the field is usually about twenty, including missionaries, superintendents of schools, teachers and helpers, together with their wives.

Mission Station at Cantonment, Oklahoma.

Seventeen years have elapsed since the first missionary undertook to do mission work as the representative of the General Conference. Under many difficulties was the beginning made. By many severe trials has the work since been sorely tested. Sometimes it seemed that the

cause could not survive the awful shocks. But the Lord always granted recovery, and opened the way for repeated extensions of the work, until now a well organized system covers the field, manned with tried and able workers and supported by an enthusiastic missionary spirit among the churches. It constitutes one of the worthy activities, for the sake of which the Conference is entitled to exist. This is the fruit which evidences that God's spirit works through the Conference. It is the glory of her consecrated activity. Though not a large number of conversions can be shown, yet those sheaves already garnered are prophetic of the coming harvest.

CHAPTER XI.

Home Mission.

In a former chapter has been recorded that the Conference of 1878 made arrangements for the employment of a home missionary, who should give his whole time to evangelization work. As worker in this department a call had been extended to S. F. Sprunger. But he was unwilling to discontinue his work in his church without the consent of the members. They were willing to let him go for a short time, but not permanently. As no other suitable person could be secured, the method formerly employed was again resorted to—namely that of sending out different ministers for short periods to visit the churches. From 1878 to 1881 S. F. Sprunger, M. S. Moyer and A. E. Funk served in this manner. The sections visited were mostly in Indiana, Ohio and near Niagara Falls. Comparatively little was accomplished.

At the Conference in 1881 it was decided to send out alternately a minister from the east to travel in the west, and then one from the west to travel in the east—each to spend six months at this work. Among those sent there should also be such as were able to preach in English. It was expected that much good would be accomplished by this somewhat novel scheme. However it was never put into operation ; in fact, almost nothing was done until the Conference met again. At the session of 1884 neither the president nor the secretary of the

Home Mission Committee were present, nor had they sent in reports. Chr. Krehbiel, as third member, gave a verbal report, stating that during the three years past two ministers had been instructed to visit in certain places. The conference minutes, referring to Krehbiel's report, say: "What was verbally added by the speaker did much toward making a deep impression on the Conference and disposing it toward the employment of a permanent home Missionary."

After deliberation on the matter the Conference decided to drop the plan of 1881 and return to the one of 1878, which called for one permanent home missionary. The committee was now increased to five members; the persons elected being H. Richert, Chr. Krehbiel, S. F. Sprunger, D. Goerz, J. S. Moyer. Up to this time it had been impossible to secure a suitable person for this difficult position. In order to perform this work successfully, the occupant must be thoroughly educated and able to speak fluently in public in both English and German. He should be a good judge of human nature; should be of such amiable disposition as readily to win the hearts of the people; and should be proof against pride or conceit to which constant manifestation of respect and deference naturally would expose him. He needed a good supply of mother wit and tact, so that under the greatly varying conditions and surroundings, he might easily adapt himself to each particular situation. But above all, this person needed to be a man of strong faith and full of life and fire. In short, such a man as needed is a great scarcity. But the Lord had prepared a man for the place. In an extraordinary degree

the qualities enumerated combined themselves in J. B. Baer, to whom the attention of the Conference was now directed. To him a call was extended to become the Home Missionary of the General Conference.

Baer was at that time a student at Union Theological Seminary in New York, and as he did not wish to abandon the course entered upon, he declined to accept the call to a permanent position, but signified his willingness to spend his vacation at that kind of work. To this the committee agreed. Baer accordingly labored during the summer of 1885 with evident success, among the churches of Pennsylvania and those in the vicinity of Niagara Falls.

Although the committee did not consider Baer dismissed after his brief service, the department was nevertheless without an active worker. But the present energetic committee was unwilling that the work should lie dormant. M. S. Moyer was temporarily called into service. From October 1885 until the close of that year he visited churches in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa and New York. Especial attention was given to the churches at Bluffton, Dalton and Trenton, Ohio, and to the Amish churches in Illinois. These churches were already at that time in sympathy with the conference movement. After Moyer's tour the work rested until September of 1886, when the committee secured another worker in D. B. Hirschler. His activity in this department continued for seven months. During this time he visited the Amish churches in Illinois, the churches in Kansas, an Amish church at Stuttgart, Arkansas, the churches in Missouri and finally several churches in Nebraska, when his work was suddenly interrupted by the sickness

and death of his wife; after which he resigned his position.

Just about this time (spring of 1887) word came from Baer, who had just completed his seminary course, that his services were now at the command of the committee. In accordance with the call extended to Baer by the Conference, the committee promptly received him into active service. For his first work the committee directed him to Manitoba, where there seemed now to be an opening for home missionary work. Two months Baer labored there and, having found an open door, was enabled by the Lord's aid to make the beginning for the revival of spiritual life in that extensive Mennonite settlement. Later Baer labored also among the churches of Minnesota and Dakota; now, at the request of the Mission Board, in a double capacity—that is, in the interest of both Foreign and Home Mission. His labors were everywhere blest with good results. Wherever he went, he won the hearts of the people, and his return was eagerly desired.

The more energetic prosecution of home mission work during these three years already showed some of its beneficent results at the conference session of 1887. Through the labors and reports of the workers, the Conference had gained increased knowledge of the condition and needs of the churches, and was thus in position to adopt measures to suit. So, for example, the church at Stevensville, Ontario, Canada, was in need of a meeting house; accordingly the Conference recommended that the churches assist that little congregation with funds for the erection of a church. And this they gladly did. The spiritually needy condition of the churches in Mani-

toba induced the Conference to instruct H. Richert to visit there and do what he could for the people. This Richert did, spending a month there in spiritual labors attended with signal blessing. As Home Missionary the Conference re-elected Baer. The members elected into the committee were: M. S. Moyer, A. M. Fretz, D. Gaeddert, D. Goerz and L. Sudermann.

During the year 1888 Baer was exceedingly active. He succeeded in visiting with and laboring in all churches connected with the General Conference, and in addition he worked in many other Mennonite churches. He began the year's work in Pennsylvania during January, visited all the conference churches there, preached several times in most of them and made many visits at the homes. Of his work there Baer writes as follows: "Our calls at the homes we have often continued undismayed by cold and storms. During late months I have been almost constantly on the road during very severe winter weather; often being out both during the day and in the evening. In a number of churches we made calls at the homes during the day and held services in the evenings. In the course of one week fifty calls at homes were made. In most cases I read a chapter from God's Word, prayed with the people and spoke to them of the "one thing, needed." In this manner Baer zealously pushed on in the work, gradually moving westward until he had reached the boundary of Colorado. Farther west, excepting a small church on the Pacific coast, there were no Mennonite churches at that time. This exhausting activity proved almost too much for Baer's strength. Of his activity in the Middle states he writes, as follows:

"On some Sundays it falls to my lot to deliver from three to four sermons and addresses; rarely less than two. During the week we have had in some churches from two to six services. At some places we daily made as many as ten house calls."

In one church in Iowa the Lord gave grace that a revival took place. During the eight days of Baer's stay thirty conversions occurred. Pulaski is still reaping the blessings of that season of refreshing.

During this year Baer travelled in eight states, delivered 235 sermons and addresses, and made hundreds of visits in homes. Everywhere he sought to awaken and stimulate spiritual life, as also to cultivate a sense of fellowship with other churches. That his labors were appreciated is evident from the reports published by correspondents in the "Bundesbote" of seasons of blessings enjoyed during Baer's stay. This work also proved of advantage to the Conference, in that an increased interest in her aims and undertakings became manifest, this being noticeable particularly in churches which had formerly been somewhat indifferent.

During 1889 little home mission work was done, as Baer made a tour through Europe during that year. In 1890 M. S. Moyer was directed to visit the different churches in Iowa. In March of 1890 Baer again entered upon active service, and has since, excepting a few pauses caused by sickness, constantly devoted himself to this exhausting work. To describe all the work and travels in detail would be out of place here. Only in general outline shall this constantly expanding work be here recorded. After visiting a few churches in the middle states, and then laboring for a time in Minnesota and Da-

kota, Baer pushed westward during 1890 until he reached the Pacific coast, where he labored among the Mennonites settling at that time in Oregon and Washington. Since almost everything was new and unsettled here, Baer was able to do much toward directing religious and church interests into well ordered channels, and so toward preventing spiritual declension, which so frequently attends settlement in new countries. The return trip Baer made by way of Manitoba and thus found opportunity to visit the brethren there a second time. Already an awakening of new life was noticeable there. Of that visit he writes: "On Sunday we had three meetings in churches twelve miles distant from each other. The doors are opening here more and more. This great field of labor is brought to the door of the Conference."

Being greatly encouraged by the gratifying results already attained, the conference session of 1890 had instructed the committee "in addition to Baer to send out other evangelists." The members chosen for the committe were A. S. Shelly, M. S. Moyer, Jac. J. Balzer, D. Goerz, J. R. Toews. Baer continued his activity as before, travelling through the entire country, and everywhere encouraging and stimulating spiritual life through preaching and personal work. The committee also employed N. F. Toews. Manitoba was assigned to him as his special field. Indirectly another form of home missionary activity was extended from the Conference into the Manitoba settlements. H. H. Ewert, formerly principal of the Mennonite school at Halstead, Kansas, being in full sympathy with the Conference movement, opened a school at Gretna, Manitoba, similar to the one at Halstead and conducts it with gratifying success. In a short

time his school had an attendance of forty. As he is inspector of all Mennonite schools in Manitoba, he is able to supply many local schools with teachers from his normal school. Inasmuch as these young teachers are more advanced in knowledge and hold to a higher standard of spiritual life, improved conditions are gradually permeating the whole settlement through this work. In addition to his educational labors, Ewert frequently preaches and in this manner exerts directly an influence for good upon the community.

Home missionary work was also done by some other workers between 1890 and 1893. M. S. Moyer visited churches in Illinois and Iowa; A. S. Shelly those in New York and Canada; J. A. Sprunger was active in Kansas and Missouri, D. Gaeddert and J. R. Toews worked in Manitoba, Washington and Oregon. It may be noted here that the district conferences have been and are doing much in caring for their local home missionary interests, and undoubtedly the time is coming when each district will have its own permanent worker. Of this there is the greater need, as it is entirely impossible for the one worker of the General Conference to satisfy the demands of the great and expanding field. Then also a worker limited to a narrower field can be better posted on particular local needs and has more time to give to them the needed attention.

By the Conference session of 1859 the following persons were elected members of the Home Mission Committee: J. J. Balzer, J. Penner III., W. S. Gottschall,[1] J. S. Moyer, N. C. Hirschy,[2] D. Goerz.

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[1] See Biographical Appendix. [2] Ibid.

In his activity Baer has been confining himsef more and more to interests of a general nature, such as looking after new fields, activity in churches which do not yet affiliate with the General Conference, and the like. As such general work must also be considered his assistance in the formation of two new district conferences, the Northern and the Pacific Coast Conference. Through his personal acquaintance with all the churches and their respective situations and conditions, he is in position to know what combinations can be made to advantage, and he can readily prepare the way for the execution of any such plan. The formation of the Northern Conference is due largely to his mediation, while the Pacific Coast Conference is wholly the result of his labors.

The efforts at evangelization and organization, put forth through the Home Mission department of the General Conference, have already produced rich fruits for the Kingdom, and helped greatly in the edification of the Mennonite denomination, and the indications are that the Lord will use this department for the accomplishment of still greater things.

CHAPTER XII.

District Conferences.

When the General Conference was at first organized the participating churches were so few in number, and the departmental work was so small, that all the local demands for co-operative assistance could be satisfied through that organization. But as it increased in size, it became correspondingly less able to deal with local affairs. This made it necessary to devise some other means for satisfying these local demands, and the need was met by the organization of district conferences. This arrangement secures a practical and advantageous division of labor. The General Conference now concerns itself only with such matters as are of equal interest to all churches, and which do not properly come within the province of a district conference, or for which the local organization is inadequate. Such interests are Foreign Mission, Publication, Home Mission in the wider sense, and Higher Education. As within the province of district conferences may be considered Education, Evangelization, Local Church Matters, Philanthropical Work—such as the care of orphans, the poor, the aged, etc. District conferences, while organized entirely independent of the General Conference, are nevertheless subdivisions of the general co-operative movement, which pursue the same aims with the General Conference, and therefore, while engaged in advancing

local interests, they also seek to promote the general cause; just as on the other hand the General Conference seeks as far as possible to promote the welfare of the several district conferences. As a rule district conferences hold annual sessions. Triennially delegates from the churches of all the districts meet in general conference. Thus both the local and general interests receive proper attention and prosper the better for it.

L. O. Schimmel. *Aug. Shuhart.* *A. S. Shelly.* *N. B. Grubb.*
Silas M. Grubb. *Jacob S. Moyer.* *W. S. Gottschall.*
H. M. Clymer. *A. B. Shelly.* *A. M. Fretz.*

Ministers of the Eastern Conference.

In the course of time one district conference after another has been formed, until there are at present five of these organizations as follows: 1. Eastern, 2. Middle, 3. Western, 4. Northern, 5. Pacific Coast.

With the first of these organizations the reader is already acquainted. The Eastern Conference was organized on October 28, 1847, at Schippac, Montgomery County, Pa. This organization exists under a constitution which makes it both a legislative and an advisory body. All churches at present connected with this con-

Delegates of the Eastern Conference, Spring of 1898.

ference are located in the following counties of eastern Pennsylvania: Berks, Bucks, Lancaster, Montgomery, and in the city of Philadelphia. In 1897 sixteen churches were connected, having a total membership of 1650. Special credit is due this conference for its services to the publication interests among Mennonites. For many years it was under the auspices and financial responsibility of the Eastern District that the "Volksblatt" and later the

Home for the Aged. Frederick, Montgomery Co., Pa.

"Mennonitische Friedensbote" were published. Soon after the General Conference took charge of the German publications, the Eastern Conference began to publish the "Mennonite," an English monthly church paper. For several years this conference has also been publishing the "Mennonite Year Book," which is proving a decided success. In 1896 this conference founded an Old Folks Home at Frederick, Montgomery County, Pa., at a cost of two thousand dollars. Already a few aged persons are taking advantage of this benevolent institution and are peacefully spending their last days at the home. Evangelization work within its own district this confer-

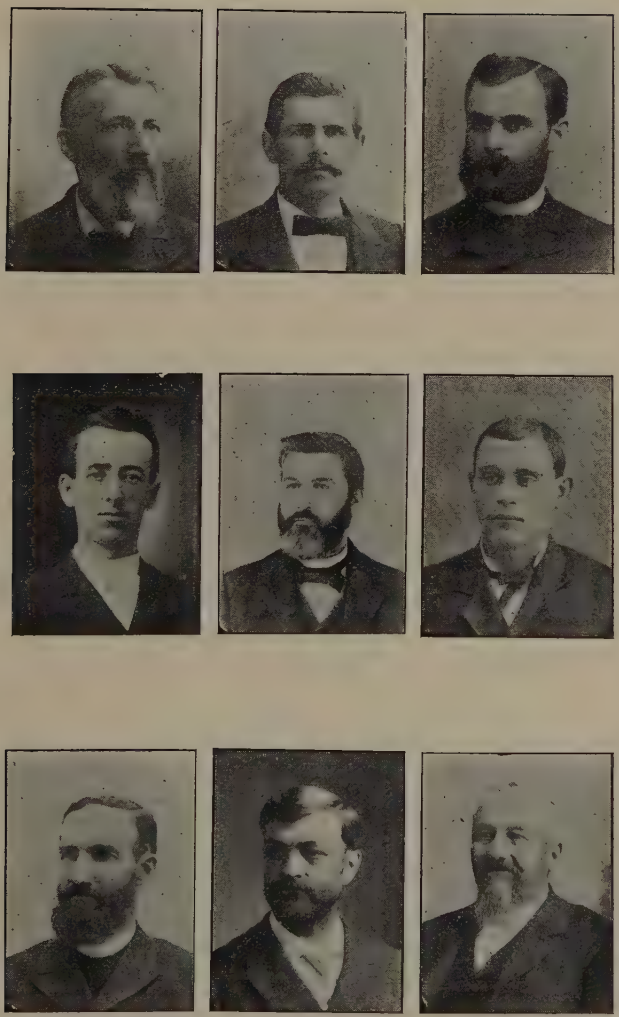
ence has never neglected. The church in Philadelphia is the fruit of such labor. Several churches which had nearly died out have been revived, and new churches have been organized and built up. Lately city mission is receiving much attention and is attended with signal blessings. Some efforts are also made to raise up additional workers from the growing generation, and education in general is receiving liberal support. Young men possessing aptitude and talent for the ministry are aided financially to obtain appropriate training. A school of its own the district has not, however, the conference co operates with the spiritually related Schwenkfeldians in the maintainance of their excellent school, and many Mennonite young people attend that institution.

* * *

The Middle District Conference has also been spoken of in a former chapter, but under a different name. Its present name this organization bears only since 1888. But its historical development dates back to 1868. At that time there was a great demand by small and new churches for visits from ministers. In order to supply in a measure this demand, the church at Summerfield, Ill., and those in Lee County, Iowa, formed a co-operative union. The first meeting was held November 6, 1868, at Franklin, Iowa. They named the organization the "Western District Conference of the Mennonites of North America." Five small churches participated in the first meeting, four from Iowa as follows: West Point, Zion, Salem and Franklin; the fifth was the church at Summerfield, Ill. By the twenty-first session (1888) the number of affiliating churches had increased to thirty.

Ministers of the Middle District Conference.

C. H. A. v. d. Smissen. *Jacob Krehbiel.* *E. Hunsberger.*
Joel Lehmann. *Chr. Schowalter.*
J. C. Mehl. *H. J. Krehbiel.* *M. S. Moyer.*



Ministers of the Middle District Conference.

S. F. Sprunger.	*W. W. Miller.*	*J. B. Baer.*
N. C. Hirschy.	*P. P. Lehmann.*	*V. Strubhar.*
I. A. Sommer.	*H. P. Krehbiel.*	*B. Stucky.*

But these were scattered over so great a territory, and represented so many divergent local interests, that it was felt that the organization could not properly care for all interests, wherefore a division was thought advisable. As the churches in Kansas had previously organized a local conference, the Western Conference decided to discontinue the present organization, with the understanding that as many churches as chose to do so might unite with the Kansas Conference, while the rest would immediately reorganize. Accordingly the Western Conference adjourned sine die.

Those delegates, who at this time knew that their churches would unite with the reorganized conference, immediately met for organization. Because now no longer the most western district, they adopted the name of "Middle District Conference" for the new body. Only six churches participated in this brief session, namely: Berne, Ind., Summerfield, Ills., Dalton, O., Zion, Ia., West Point, Ia., and Franklin, Ia. However in the following year six other churches, which had cooperated before, united. This conference, therefore, was composed in 1889 of twelve churches with a membership of about 1250. Several churches have since united. In 1897 fifteen churches stood in active connection, with a membership of 2800 approximately.

The Middle District Conference aims to be active along three lines: 1. Evangelization, 2. Education, 3. City Mission. The first named activity has been prosecuted with more or less vigor throughout the history of the organization. The Evangelization Committee sees to it that every year all the conference churches as well as other Mennonite churches in the district are visited.

As yet the conference has no permanent home missionary, but at the session of 1897 the committee was instructed to employ one. In the past educational interests have been furthered by contributions to the schools at Wadsworth, Ohio, and Newton, Kansas. It has now been decided to establish a school within the district. A committee is at work upon this matter, and with God's blessing this district will in the course of a few years have its own school.

* * *

The organization now known as the Western District Conference, is the successor to the Kansas Conference. The latter had its first session "in December 1877 and was continued until 1891, at which time it was dissolved, only immediately to reorganize and continue activity under a new name and a fixed constitution" and with extended borders. The new organization was called the "Western District Conference." In its first session nineteen churches participated. At the session of 1897 twenty-seven churches were represented. Of these twenty-one are located in Kansas, five in Oklahoma and one in Nebraska. They have a total membership of about 3300. This conference has manifested a commendable interest for education. Through it the Mennonite school at Halstead has been founded, and was conducted and maintained by it until that institution was merged into Bethel College. In addition to its Committee on Education this conference has three other standing committees as follows: Home Mission, On Church affairs, For Care of Poor. Of late years increasing attention is given to evangelization; a home missionary being kept

at work a large part of the time. The committee on church affairs seeks to adjust difficulties arising in churches. The committee for the care of the poor has been enabled to relieve many who were in distress. This is a practical arrangement which deserves to be extended into other districts.

* * *

The Northern Conference held its first session in October, 1891, at Mountain Lake, Minnesota. In order that this new movement might profit from the experience of other districts, a number of workers from the older conferences were invited to assist in the organization. Among these were A. B. Shelly, Chr. Schowalter, I. A. Sommer, and D. Goerz. Home Missionary Baer, who had planned the whole matter, was of course also present. In this first session six churches took part. A constitution was adopted in 1895. The following churches were participants at the session of 1896: Mountain Lake, Minn.; Butterfield, Minn.; Henderson, Neb.; Wisner, Neb.; Childstown, S. Dak.; Loretta, S. Dak. Their total membership is about nine hundred. This conference has made a beginning in useful activity by annually sending out a home missionary for several months, whose special work it is to cultivate the sense of fellowship and the spirit of co-operation, and to awaken an interest in mission work.

* * *

The Pacific Coast Conference is the youngest member of the family of district conferences. Its first session was held May 25 to 27, 1896, at Salem, Oregon. Here as at the Northern Conference outside visitors were pres-

ent to assist in the organization. The second session was held in June 1897, five churches participating, as follows: Zion, near Dallas, Oregon; Emmanuel, near Irving, Ore.; Waldo Hill, near Salem, Ore.; Central, near Elmyra, Ore.; Colfax, Washington. Through the zealous home missionary work of P. Aeschlemann, minister of the Colfax congregation, the spirit of fellowship and co-operation has been greatly stimulated, and several of the churches are enthusiastic in this work. The prospect is that this movement, though young and small, will experience a healthy growth, and that it will prove a powerful influence for collecting, uniting, and saving for the denomination the Mennonites now settling in increasing numbers on the Pacific coast.

CHAPTER XIII.

Publication.

The origin and early history of Mennonite journalism has been related on preceding pages. By way of review a few facts are here repeated. The first Mennonite paper in America, the "Religioese Botschafter", was published by J. H. Oberholzer and first appeared June 9, 1852, at Milford, Bucks Co., Pa. After July 30, 1856, it appeared under the name "Das Christliche Volksblatt;" J. H. Oberholzer still being its editor, but proprietorship having passed to the Mennonite Printing Union. On January 1, 1867, this company changed the name of the paper to "Der Mennonitische Friedensbote." A. B. Shelly, who had for a short time served as editor pro tem. on the Volksblatt, was now made editor. In 1871 the company turned the paper over to the Eastern Conference which continued its publication, A. B. Shelly being retained as editor.

From the beginning this undertaking had not proven a financial success. Repeatedly the publishers had to close the year with a loss. With laudable public spirit members of the Eastern Conference had through a number of years cheerfully supplied the funds, believing that the welfare of the denomination was being promoted through the paper. When, however, the territory was divided about 1875 by the appearance of the "Zur Heimath", rendering it still more difficult to maintain the paper, many became convinced that the publication of a general church paper is properly a function of the General Conference. Consolidation of the two papers

was therefore advocated, with the understanding that the General Conference should publish the new paper. By the year 1878 this scheme had gained sufficiently in favor that the publication interest was considered at the Conference and a committee was appointed to arrange for the consolidation.

Into this committee were elected A. B. Shelly, D. Goerz and Chr. Schowalter. Before anything definite had been done by them, the Western Publishing Company, publishers of the "Zur Heimath", sustained a serious loss which, however, greatly facilitated the project. On March 7, 1879, the printing establishment of that company, located at Halstead, Kansas, was destroyed by fire. Their paper, the "Zur Heimath," continued to be be published, but through the committee arrangements were completed by which, after June 1, 1880, this paper and the Friedensbote appeared on alternate weeks, thus supplying the reader with a weekly. The management of the papers remained unchanged ; however both papers could be ordered together at a reduced price.

Under this arrangement both papers continued until 1881. Meanwhile the committee had obtained the consent of the Eastern Conference and the Western Publishing Company to consolidate the papers in the hands of the General Conferenee, and so reported to the session of 1881. Upon this the Conference adopted measures for conducting such work by creating the Publication Department. The management of this department was put in charge of five persons. The Conference elected the chief editor ; to the district conferences was granted the privilege of electing assistant editors. It was ordered that a sample copy should be issued as soon as possible and sent to all

subscribers of the former papers. The regular weekly publication should begin as soon as 2000 subscribers had been secured. In order that the paper might bear a name expressive of its enlarged sphere and special mission it was called "Der Christliche Bundesbote." As first members of the Publication Board were elected A. B. Shelly, A. E. Funk, S. F. Sprunger, Chr. Krehbiel, and Chr. Schowalter. D. Goerz was chosen editor in chief, and A. B. Shelly became associate editor in charge of the Eastern Department. Berne, Ind., was selected for the place of publication, and S. F. Sprunger was made business manager.

The sample copy of the Bundesbote appeared January 5, 1882. Instead of securing the 2000 subscribers desired, only 1000 were obtained. So the paper was published as a bi-weekly at a somewhat reduced price. Under this arrangement it appeared until January 1888, when, having secured nearly 2000 subscribers, it began to appear as a weekly. The session of 1884 believed it would improve the paper, if only one man would have charge of the editorial work and devote his whole time to it. Accordingly the Conference made I. A. Sommer editor, and he has since successfully performed this duty. In 1885 the Conference undertook the publication of a German Sunday school paper, "Der Kinderbote." It was a successful undertaking. The paper soon gained a circulation of 1300 and has greatly increased since. Later the Sunday school Quarterlies and the Bundesbote Kalender were added to the list of publications.

As early as 1881 the Conference had instructed the Publication Board to endeavor to establish a book store. But nothing was done in this direction until in 1884,

when Joel Welty and his brother offered to loan one thousand dollars to the Conference for 3 years without interest, on condition that this money be used in establishing the contemplated book store. The offer was accepted. The undertaking was further aided by additional loans on similar conditions. D. Goerz loaned 327 dollars and D. B. Hirschler 300 dollars. Some money was also donated to this undertaking. The Board was thus put in position to begin the book trade. The store was located at Berne, Ind., and the enterprise entered upon a fairly successful career. By 1887 the establishment had sold over eleven thousand volumes.

Encouraged by the results attained, the Conference decided in 1887 permanently to continue this branch of activity, and recommended the employment of colporters for the greater spread of good literature, C. H. Wedel being suggested as colporter for the General Conference. Since that time this branch of activity has steadily though slowly increased, and has proven a helpful agency for the introduction of denominational publications, such as hymnals, pastor's manuals and the like. At the same time it has been instrumental in supplying Mennonite homes with more and better literature.

Under the new constitution the Publication Board consists of six members. In 1896 the following persons were elected into this committee : N. B. Grubb,[1] W. J. Ewert, H. J. Krehbiel,[2] J. F. Lehman,[3] J. Janzen, J. van Steen.

[1] See Biographical Appendix. [2] Ibid.

[3] Japhet F. Lehman was born June 8, 1860 in Adams County, Indiana. His education he obtained in the common schools. He is a laymember. In 1893 he was elected a member of the Publication Board and was re-elected in 1896. He has since been made business manager of the department. His home is at Berne, Ind.

CHAPTER XIV.

Education.

When the General Conference decided in 1878 to discontinue the school at Wadsworth, the Mission Board was at the same time instructed to re-establish the school at some more suitable place. The purpose, therefore, then was simply to remove the school—not to abandon it. It was this purpose which greatly stimulated the school interest in Kansas, and suggested the idea for a more advanced institution of learning for that section. For originally they had there aimed at a school for very elementary instruction only. But now when it was proposed to remove the conference school to a section where German was the current language, it was naturally expected that it would be located in Kansas, that therefore the proposed local elementary school could be merged into this general and higher institution. It was with this end in view that in 1879 a committee of the Kansas Conference proposed to the Mission Board to combine the projected school for Kansas with the intended conference mission school. However the situation of the mission enterprise was then not such as to encourage the Board to venture upon the educational undertaking, hence they did not enter into the proposed combination.

But the educational interest had now been thoroughly

awakened in Kansas, and it continued to gain from year to year, until in 1882 a beginning was made by opening a school on September 12, in the Alexanderwohl settlement, twelve miles north of Newton. This school was undertaken and supported by the Kansas Conference. H. H. Ewert served as principal. The enrollment for the first year was twenty-nine. As a larger attendance was expected during the second year, it became necessary to build. Propositions were made by Newton and Halstead to furnish buildings, and as Halstead's offer to furnish a six thousand dollar building rent free for five years was the best, the choice fell upon Halstead. The beautiful new building was dedicated on September 16, 1883, in the presence of a great multitude, and on September 19 the school itself began its work. H. H. Ewert continued as principal and P. J. Galle was given charge of the English department. During the first year the attendance was very gratifying, the enrollment being fifty-four. A. S. Shelly took charge of the English department in 1884. The Indian mission school, spoken of in another chapter, was brought into connection with this school in 1885. During this year the enrollment, not including the Indian students, reached sixty-five. In 1887 H. O. Kruse was put in charge of the English department.

The Kansas Conference had located the school at Halstead for five years; after which it should be decided whether or not to establish it there permanently. About a year before the time expired, H. H. Ewert began to stir up interest for the school in Newton. He secured promises of very liberal support if the school should be located at Newton. Business men and others in the city

subscribed twenty thousand dollars in cash for the project. Many town lots, also forty acres of land two miles north of Newton, were donated. When the matter had progressed thus far, the proposition was submitted to the Kansas Conference for consideration, it being expected that the proposition would be accepted with alacrity. However at a special session held April 28, 1887, the liberal proposition was declined. But the Conference gave its consent that a company, composed of conference members, accept the offer, solicit a fund, erect the buildings, and when all should be in successful operation that then the Conference would be ready to accept the school from this company.

The company as suggested was organized and entered upon the undertaking. The prospective school was named Bethel College. The relation of it to the conference school at Halstead was defined at the next session of the Kansas Conference, namely that these should for the present be two separate schools. Not long after this the Bethel College Society ceased to confine itself to the Kansas Conference, and began to solicit contributions in all churches connected with the General Conference, as also in some others. The field for the school had been expanded. This should now become the educational institution for all Mennonites in America. When the project took this form, contributions flowed freely from all sides. Almost one half the money contributed came from outside the state of Kansas. Until 1890 H. H. Ewert, as originator of the Bethel College project, had been the principal leader in the undertaking. In the year named, however, he received an urgent invitation to take charge of the educational interests among the

Mennonites of Manitoba, and as he believed it his duty to accept the call, he removed to that field in the following year. H. O. Kruse succeeded him as principal of the school at Halstead. The direction of the Bethel College enterprise went into the hands of D. Goerz.

Bethel College. Main Building.

The Bethel College enterprise had many difficulties to surmount and only after prolonged exertion and after many perplexities did the society finally succeed in completing the main building in 1893, at a cost of about thirty-five thousand dollars. A fund of about sixty-five thousand had also been collected, from the interest of which the school should be maintained. In the year named the Kansas Conference decided to discontinue her school at Halstead, to donate all its equipments, including the library (which also contained the library of

Bethel College and Students' Boarding Halls.

Library in Bethel College.

Literary Society Hall in Bethel College.

the Wadsworth school) to Bethel College, and henceforth to support that institution. Accordingly the whole equipment of the school at Halstead was removed to Bethel College, where, beginning in the fall of 1893, the school was continued.

Bethel College is situated on a pleasant elevation, about one mile north of Newton, Kansas. At first the attendance was not as large as had been desired and expected. However the enrollment has gradually increased, until now it ranges between eighty and one hundred. Although there are students from various states and a few even from Russia, by far the greater number are

Art Studio in Bethel College.

Mennonite Educational Institution. Gretna, Manitoba.

from Kansas, and most of these from the immediate vicinity of the school.

For the Mennonites of the United States in general, but for those of Kansas in particular, the Kansas Conference School and its child, Bethel College, have been a great blessing, and it may properly be expected that Bethel College will continue the beneficent usefulness in the future.

In sections far removed from Bethel College, observing people are beginning to realize that the local needs can not be properly satisfied by a school so far away. For this reason efforts are now being made in different

Prof. H. H. Ewert and Family, and Students of the Mennonite Educational Institution, on a Snow Drift sixteen feet high in front of the School Building.

districts, to secure schools of their own, located more conveniently for attendance by the growing generation. May the day soon come when Mennonite educational facilities shall everywhere be conveniently located at the door of the Mennonite youth.

CHAPTER XV.

General Conference sessions—Ninth to Fourteenth. Growth of the Organization. Constitution. Representation at the different sessions. Conclusion.

The activity of the General Conference during all the triennial periods has already been recorded, but nothing in particular has been given of sessions nine to fourteen. Let us now attend to these.

With the exception of the first session, the General Conference had held its first eight meetings east of the Mississippi river. The Ninth Conference, however, was held in the west, and that as far out as Kansas. It met in the pleasant little village of Halstead, the original center of the Mennonite settlement of that section. Very low transportation rates had been secured, and as this new country with its foreign settlers then had great attractiveness, many others besides the conference delegates were attracted from eastern states. Again, to the European settlers in Kansas, the General Conference was something new, consequently great numbers flocked in from the surrounding settlements to attend the sessions. As everything was still new and undeveloped, Halstead then had but a small church building, which could not nearly accommodate the multitudes which sought admission. Not only was the church too small, but the dwellings of the very hospitable church members would not hold all the guests that sought shelter.

Mennonite Church in Halstead, Kans., in which General Conference met in 1881.

So in order to provide lodging for those who found no room elsewhere, the church rented a vacant two-story store building. On the upper floor beds were made for hundreds, below board was offered, of course without charge to guests.

Present Mennonite Church at Halstead, Kansas.

Its sessions the Ninth General Conference held November 14—22, 1881. Thirty-two churches were represented. Of these ten participated for the first time, Pennsylvania furnishing two, South Dakota two, Kansas five, and Missouri one. The following table gives further particulars.

	Church.	*State.*	*Delegates.*	*Votes.*
1.	Childstown	S. Dakota	Jos. Graber, Chr. Mueller	8
2.	Friedensberg	"	Benj. Schmitt, Cor. Ewert	4
3.	Summerfield	Illinois	J. E. Krehbiel	5
4.	Berne	Indiana	S. F. Sprunger, Joh. Sprunger	6
5.	Franklin	Iowa	J. S. Hirschler	2
6.	West Point	"	J. C. Krehbiel	2
7.	Zion	"	Chr. Schowalter	5
8.	Alexanderwohl	Kansas	H. Richert, P. Unruh H. Unruh, H. Baumann	16
9.	Bruderthal	"	W. Ewert, Jac. Funk Rud. Riesen, H. Ewert	5
10.	Canton	"	Joh. Ratzlaff, T. Wedel P. Richert, A. Ratzlaff	4
11.	Christian	"	V. Krehbiel, W. Galle Jac. Vogt, D. J. Krehbiel	4
12.	Emmaus	"	L. Sudermann, P. Dyck	3
13.	Gnadenberg	"	J. Schroeder, A. Harms	2
14.	Halstead	"	D. Goerz, B. Warkentin J. Lehmann	3
15.	Hoffnungsau	"	D. Gaeddert, D. Unruh D. Flamming, G. Becker	8
16.	Hoffnungsfeld	"	Jac. Stucky, J. Gehring Sol. Krehbiel	3
17.	Newton	"	B. Regier, H. Sudermann	2
18.	Bethel	Missouri	M. S. Moyer, P. P. Lehmann, Chr. Welty	4
19.	Wadsworth	Ohio	E. Hunsberger	3

Church.	*State.*	*Delegates.*	*Votes.*
20. Bartolet	Pennsylvania		1
21. Baumansville	"		1
22. Boyertown	"		1
23. Deep Run	"		4
24. Flatland	"		1
25. Hereford	"	A. B. Shelly	5
26. East Swamp	"	J. S. Moyer	3
27. Philadelphia	"	A. E. Funk	3
28. Saucona	"	W. G. Moyer	2
29. Schwenksville	"		4
30. Springfield	"		3
31. Upper Milford	"		3
32. West Swamp	"		6
		Total Votes	126

Ninth General Conference. Held at Halstead, Kan. 1881.

Besides those matters which were attended to at this session, but have already elswhere been recorded, the matter relating to a catechism came up. The committee appointed at the previous session had delegated the work of writing a catechism and confession of faith to Chr. Schowalter. His work was submitted for examination. The committee to which it was referred reported favorably. Accordingly it was ordered that the catechism be published. As compensation for his labors Schowalter should receive the net gain of the first edition. This catechism appeared in 1882 and has come into general use.

* * *

The Tenth General Conference met November 6—12, 1884, at Berne, Ind. Five churches participated for the fisrt time; from Canada one, New York two, Missouri one and Pennsylvania one. Three chutches, though still members of the Conference, had failed to send delegates.

Mennnonite Church at Berne, Indiana.

For details of representation see the table below. Through the officers of the Conference an invitation had been extended to the aged J. H. Oberholzer to attend this session. He attended and was thus permitted to see how much the movement he helped to originate had gained in power and volume. It was to him a season of rejoicing. An invitation had also been extended to J. F. Funk of Elkhart, Ind., but he was not present.

	Church.	*State.*	*Delegates.*	*Votes.*
1.	Black Creek	Canada	Jac. Krehbiel	1
2.	Salem(Childstown)	S. Dakota	Chr. Kaufmann	5
3.	Summerfield	Illinois	Joh. Brand, D. B. Ruth	5
4.	Berne	Indiana	C. Sprunger, S. F. Sprunger, Jac. Lehmann, F. Sprunger, P. Bixler, C. B. Lehmann	6
5.	West Point	Iowa	Chr. Schowalter	2
6.	Zion	"	Chr. Schowalter	5

Church.	*State.*	*Delegates.*	*Votes.*
7. Alexanderwohl	Kansas	H. Richert, H. Baumann	16
8. Bruderthal	"	W. Ewert	4
9. Canton	"	John Ratzlaff	5
10. Christian	"	W. Galle	7
11. Emmaus	"	L. Sudermann	3
12. Gnadenberg	"	A. Harms	3
13. Halstead	"	Chr. Krehbiel, D. Goerz, J. L. Schowalter	5
14. Hoffnungsau	"	A. Ratzlaff, Jac. Regier	8
15. Newton	"	L. Sudermann	3
16. Bethel	Missouri	M. S. Moyer, A. J. Moser, P. C. Lehmann	3
17. Elkton	"	P. S. Lehmann	2
18. Clarence Center	New York	Jac. Krehbiel	1
19. Niagara Falls	"	"	1
20. Wadsworth	Ohio	A. Oberholzer	2
21. Bartolet	Pennsylvania,	A. B. Shelly	1
22. Baumansville	"	" "	1
23. Boyertown	"	" "	2
24. Deep Run	"	J. S. Moyer	4
25. East Swamp	"	A. B. Shelly	3
26. Flatland	"	" "	1
27. Germantown	"	N. B. Grubb	1
28. Hereford	"	A. B. Shelly, J. S. Moyer	3
29. Philadelphia	"	N. B. Grubb	4
30. Saucona	"	N. B. Grubb, C. H. A. van der Smissen	3
31. Schippac	"	N. B. Grubb, C. H. A. van der Smissen	3
32. Schwenksville	"	A. B. Shelly	4
33. Springfield	"	J. S. Moyer	3
34. Upper Milford	"	C. van der Smissen	3
35. West Swamp	"	A. B. Shelly	7
		Total Votes	130

Tenth General Conference. Held at Berne, Ind. 1884.

The Eleventh General Conference met on November 7, 1887, in the church of the West Swamp Congregation in Bucks County, Pa. At this session the number of churches represented was again thirty-five, but of these three were new ; two from Kansas, one from Ohio. The table opposite gives additional information.

Various regulations, intended to assist the Conference in conducting its work more successfully, were introduced. Heretofore there had been no hesitation to place the same person on several standing committees. Experience had shown that this was detrimental to some lines of work ; for naturally each man would concentrate his chief efforts upon some particular line, to the neglect of others. Recognizing this, it was decided that the same person could serve on but one standing committee. The business committee formerly served only during the session. It was now made a standing committee, in order that they might prepare a program for the coming session previous to the time of meeting. Experience had also taught that meetings proved more pleasant during seasons of moonshine, wherefore it was ordered that future meetings should always be appointed about the time of full moon.

Repeatedly bequests had been offered to the Conference, but as yet the Conference was not in position legally to receive and control such gifts. To meet the situation, the Conference created a Board of Trustees who should receive and control bequests, made to the several departments of the Conference. The first trustees were S. F. Sprunger, D. Goerz, Chr. Krehbiel, A. B. Shelly, C. H. A. van der Smissen, and N. B. Grubb.

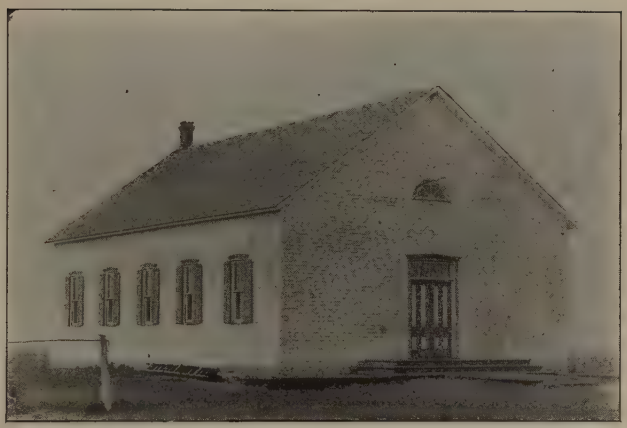
	Church.	*State.*	*Delegates.*	*Votes.*
1.	Canada	Canada	Jac. Krehbiel	1
2.	Salem	S. Dakota	Chr. Mueller	5
3.	Summerfield	Illinois	Chr. Auernheimer	5
4.	Berne	Indiana	S. F. Sprunger, J. Welty, I. A. Sommer	11
5.	Franklin	Iowa	Chr. Schowalter	1
6.	West Point	"	" "	2
7.	Zion	"	" "	5
8.	Alexanderwohl	Kansas	H. Richert, H. Goerz	16
9.	Emmaus	"	L. Sudermann	4
10.	Gnadenberg	"	Jac. Toews	6
11.	Halstead	"	Chr. Krehbiel, D. Goerz	6
12.	Hoffnungsau	"	D. Gaeddert	9
13.	Hillsboro	"	H. Richert	2
14.	Newton	"	Jac. Toews	5
15.	Peabody	"	L. Sudermann	1
16.	Bethel	Missouri	P. P. Lehmann, M. S. Moyer	4
17.	Elkton	"	Chr. Gerber	1
18.	Clarence Center	New York	Jac. Krehbiel	1
19.	Niagara Falls	"	" "	1
20.	Salem (Dalton)	Ohio	A. A. Sommer	2
21.	Wadsworth	"	E. Hunsberger	2
22.	Bartolet	Pennsylvania	W. S. Gottschall	1
23.	Baumansville	"	S. Ott	1
24.	Boyertown	"	A. H. Gottschall	2
25.	Deep Run	"	A. M. Fretz, A. M. Richert, A. F. Meyers, A. L. Fretz, H. B. Kratz, J. M. Fretz	6
26.	East Swamp	"	J. H. Oberholzer, A. B. Shelly	4
27.	Flatland	"	A. B. Shelly, A. Landis	2
28.	Germantown	"	N. B. Grubb	1
29.	Gottschall	"	M. Gottschall, W. S. Gottschall	5
30.	Hereford	"	C. v. d. Smissen, J. B. Funk, J. B. Lauer, H. G. Clemmer, J. H. Bechtel, J. Oberholzer,	6
31.	Philadelphia	"	N. B. Grubb	6
32.	Saucona	"	A. M. Geissinger, W. J. Landes.	2

Church.	*State.*	*Delegates.*	*Votes.*
33. Springfield	Pennsylvania	J. S. Moyer.....	3
34. Upper Milford.	"	J. S. Stauffer, M. B. Schantz W. M. Gehmann.....	3
35. West Swamp ..	"	A. B. Shelly, J. H. Oberholzer Peter Sell	7
		Total Votes.....	139

Eleventh General Conference. Held at West Swamp, Pennsylvania. 1887.

That the boundaries of the unification movement are widening out is more particularly noticed when sessions of the Conference are held in new sections. Farther north than southern Iowa no session had yet been held when the Twelfth General Conference pushed beyond and met in Childstown, (now Ourtown) South Dakota, on October 16—22, 1890. A large gain in membership was also made at this time. Five churches attended for the first time, four of which were from Kansas and one from Minnesota. The total number of churches in conference was forty-three. Nine churches in Switzerland also co-operated with this session in support of the conference mission. The unification movement, though slowly, was steadily gaining in numbers and in strength. Elsewhere will be found a table giving the representation and other particulars.

It is commonly known that simplicity both in dress and mode of life is traditional with Mennonites, and that no small emphasis is placed on this requirement of simplicity in some places. The Conference had taken no position with regard to this matter, it being regarded as a non-essential, but had left it to the conscience of each one to decide for himself in this matter. But the ques-



Mennonite Church at Ourtown, South Dakota.

tion was now raised by newly admitted churches, whether the General Conference did not tolerate vanity and fashion too much. The Conference therefore expressed itself on this point as follows: "It is the aim of the Conference, basing upon the Bible, to exert its influence against all vanity and slavery to fashion, and all conference churches are hereby requested to cultivate simplicity and modesty."

Inquiry was also made at this session with regard to the confession of faith (creed) of the General Conference. The following answer was given: "The churches already connected with the General Conference, as also those that shall unite later, agree to adhere to the Word of God as the only true foundation of faith, and they agree to teach the fundamental doctrines of faith in accordance with the interpretation given by Menno Simon: namely, those doctrines concerning baptism upon confes-

sion of faith, refusal of the oath, apostolical church discipline, and biblical non-resistance." The discussion over the confession of faith awakened the Conference to the consciousness that it ought to have a constitution, which on the one hand should clearly set forth the tenets of faith held in common, and on the other hand should contain the business regulations of the Conference. A committee on constitution was therefore elected, composed of A. B. Shelly, Chr. Schowalter, D. Goerz and S. F. Sprunger, who should draft a constitution and submit it at the next session of the Conference.

At the time of this session the question was being gitated whether the World's Fair might be kept open on Sundays. The Conference by unanimous vote expressed itself as opposed to sunday opening.

The trustees reported, that they had found that it would be necessary to be incorporated under state laws, in order to be enabled legally to receive and control bequests. Permission was therefore given to incorporate either the Conference or the Committee of Trustees.

	Church.	*State.*	*Delegates.*	*Votes.*
1.	Stevensville	Canada	Jeff. Lehmann	2
2.	Childstown	S. Dakota	C. Kaufmann, Jos. Graber, C. Mueller, Jac. Mueller.. Joh. Graber	5
3.	Loretta	"	C. Ewert, H. Unruh	3
4.	Summerfield	Illinois	C. H. A. van der Smissen	6
5.	Berne	Indiana	S.F.Sprunger,I.A.Sommer, J. Welty, C. S. Sprunger.. Jeff. Lehmann	14
6.	Franklin	Iowa	C. Schowalter	1
7.	West Point	"	" "	2
8.	Zion	"	" "	5
9.	Alexanderwohl.	Kansas	H.Goerz,P.Pankratz,H.Richert.	18

	Church.	*State.*	*Delegates.*	*Votes.*
10.	Bruderthal	Kansas	Jac. Funk, J. W. Penner .. W. J. Ewert	5
11.	Canton	"	Joh. Ratzlaff	5
12.	Christian	"	J. H. Wedel	6
13.	Emmaus	"	G. Harder	3
14.	Gnadenberg	"	A. B. Harms	5
15.	Halstead	"	Chr. Krehbiel, D. Goerz	6
16.	Hillsboro	"	C. Ramseyer	2
17.	Hoffnungsau	"	D. Gaeddert, D. Unruh	9
18.	Hoffnungsfeld	"	Jac. Stucky, S. Krehbiel... Jac. Goering, P. Flickinger.	4
19.	Newton	"	J. R. Toews	5
20.	Pawnee Rock	"	J. Ratzlaff	2
21.	Purity	"	J. G. Graber, P. A. Graber	4
22.	West Zion	"	W. Galle	4
23.	Zion	"	C. H. Regier	1
24	Mountain Lake.	Minnesota...	H. H. Regier, J. J. Balzer, N. F. Toews	3
25.	Bethel	Missouri	P. P. Lehmann	4
26.	Elkton	"	P. S. Lehmann	1
27.	Clarence Center,	New York..	Jeff. Lehmann	2
28.	Niagara Falls..	" ..	" "	1
29.	Salem (Dalton)	Ohio	S. F. Sprunger	3
30.	Bartolet	Pennsylvania.	W. S. Gottschall	1
31.	Baumannsville.	"	" "	1
32.	Boyertown	"	" "	2
33.	Deep Run	"	A. M. Fretz	6
34.	East Swamp	"	A. B. Shelly	4
35.	Flatland	"	" "	2
36.	Germantown	"	N. B. Grubb	1
37.	Gottschall	"	W. S. Gottschall	6
38.	Hereford	"	A. S. Shelly	6
39.	Philadelphia	"	N. B. Grubb	7
40.	Saucona	"	A. B. Shelly	2
41.	Springfield	"	J. S. Moyer	3
42.	Upper Milford.	"	A. S. Shelly	3
43.	West Swamp	"	A. B. Shelly	7
			Total Votes	182

Church.	*State.*	*Delegates.*	*Votes.*
1. Langnau	Switzerland		
2. Kleinthal	"		
3. Sonnenberg	"		
4. Courtebert	"	J. A. Sprunger	28
5. Chaux d' Abel	"	J. B. Baer	
6. Neuenberg	"	I. A. Sommer	
7. Basel	"		
8. Delsbergthal	"		

Twelfth General Conference. Held at Childstown (Ourtown), South Dakota. 1890.

St. John's Mennonite Church, near Pandora and Bluffton, Ohio, in which the General Conference met in 1893.

The Thirteenth General Conference was held in the largest Mennonite congregation in the United States, namely at Bluffton, Ohio. Its sessions occurred November 19 – 26, 1893. Again there was a gain in the number of co-operating churches, the number participating

at this session being fifty. Of these twelve were new, as follows: from Iowa two, Kansas five, Nebraska one, Ohio two, Pennsylvania one, Washington one. The table below gives further particulars. The matter of incorporation had gone forward, the trustees having incorporated the General Conference under the state laws of Kansas. The committee on constitution had also been at work and submitted a proposed constitution. After carefully considering it, the Conference concluded that this proposed constitution was not just what was wanted and needed, and therefore instructed the committee to prepare another.

	Church.	*State.*	*Delegates.*	*Votes.*
1.	Stevensville	Canada	J. Eberhard	2
2.	Loretta	S. Dak.	C. Ewert	1
3.	Salem (Ourtown).	"	C. Kaufmann, Jac. Mueller, K. Ortmann, A. Graber, J. Schwarz	8
4.	Summerfield	Illinois.	C. van der Smissen	6
5.	Berne	Indiana	S. F. Sprunger, I. A. Sommer, D. Sprunger, J. Welty, J. F. Lehmann, F. Sprunger, C. Baumgartner	14
6.	Emmanuel (Noble)	Iowa	B. Eicher	4
7.	Franklin	"	C. Schowalter	1
8.	Pulaski	"	P. Roulet, C. Widmer	5
9.	Zion	"	C. Schowalter	5
10.	Alexanderwohl	Kansas.	H. Baumann, P. Balzer, P. Schroeder	18
11.	Bethel College	"	D. Goerz	1
12.	Bruderthal	"	W. J. Ewert, J. W. Penner	6
13.	Christian	"	Val. Krehbiel	6
14.	Emmaus	"	G. Harder	4
15.	Garden Twp.	"	S. S. Baumgartner	2
16.	Gnadenberg	"	J. J. Voth	5
17.	Halstead	"	C. Krehbiel, J. E. Schmitt	6

	Church.	*State.*	*Delegates.*	*Votes.*
18.	Hillsboro	Kansas	J. S. Hirschler	2
19.	Hoffnungsau	"	D. Gaeddert, A. Ratzlaff	10
20.	Johannisthal I	"	J. S. Hirschler	3
21.	" II	"	"	2
22.	Newton	"	J. Toews, J. R. Toews	6
23.	Pretty Prairie	"	J. J. Flickinger	4
24.	Ransom	"	Jac. Penner	1
25.	West Zion (Moundrige)	"	W. Galle, Jac. Rupp	5
26.	Zion (Elbing)	"	D. Goerz	1
27.	Bethel	Minn.	J. J. Balzer	4
28.	Bethel	Mo.	P. P. Lehmann, M. S. Moyer, D. Bucher, J. P. Welty	4
29.	Henderson	Neb.	P. J. Friesen, H. Epp	8
30.	Clarence Center	N. Y.	J. Eberhard	1
31.	Niagara Falls	N. Y.	"	1
32.	Bluffton	Ohio	B. Diller, A. Zurfluh, P. B. Hilty, P. P. Steiner, P. C. Suter, P. Bixler, Jr., C. D. Amstutz, C. S. Schumacher, Joh. Moser,	27
33.	Salem (Dalton)	"	J. Lehmann, D. Moser, J. H. Tchaartz, A. Welty	4
34.	Trenton	"	H. J. Krehbiel	5
35.	Wadsworth	"	E. Hunsberger, H. Oberholzer	4
36.	Bartolett	Penn.	W. S. Gottschall	1
37.	Baumannsville	"	"	1
38.	Boyertown	"	"	2
39.	Deep Run	"	W. G. Moyer	6
40.	East Swamp	"	A. B. Shelly	4
41.	Flatland	"	"	2
42.	Hereford	"	A. S. Shelly, J. B. Funk	7
43.	Philadelphia	"	N. B. Grubb	10
44.	Saucona	"	A. B. Shelly	2
45.	Schwenksville	"	W. S. Gottschall	6
46.	Souderton	"	W. G. Moyer	2
47.	Springfield	"	A. B. Shelly	3
48.	Upper Milford	"	M. B. Schantz	4
49.	West Swamp	"	A. B. Shelly	7
50.	Colfax	Wash.	J. B. Baer	1
			Total Votes	244

Thirteenth General Conference. Held at Bluffton, O. 1893.

The Fourteenth General Conference met in the second largest Mennonite congregation in the United States, namely in the Alexanderwohl church, situated about fourteen miles north of Newton, Kansas. The sessions were held October 19—27, 1896. Another decided increase in participating churches occurred. Nine churches were represented for the first time, as follows: from Kansas one, Minnesota one, Nebraska one, Ohio one, Oklahoma four, Pennsylvania one. The total number of churches in conference was sixty.

A new plan for a constitution was submitted at this session and subjected to a most careful consideration. In several respects views differed greatly. Two radically diverging tendencies in particular had ardent supporters, and occasioned no little debate; namely whether the Conference should be a purely advisory body, or whether it should also possess legislative power, and so constitute a higher authority. When first organized the Conference had resolved to be only an advisory body, and this principle was finally also faithfully adhered to in the new constitution. The discussion of the constitution occupied two and one half days. The final form it assumed gave general satisfaction to the delight of all. After its full adoption the constitution was declared in force, and all elections were conducted according to the new system.[1] The General Conference with this clearly defined system is now better prepared than ever for successfully conducting her work, and with its loyal and increasing membership will undoubtedly develop still greater usefulness in the Master's service.

* * *

[1] See Appendix II.

Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church, showing visitors at the General Conference of 1896.

Mennonite Church, Hereford, Pa. General Conference to meet here in 1899.

Here then we bring this narrative to its conclusion. It is nearly forty years since the inception of the idea of a Mennonite Unification, and today we behold in beautiful fruition what then was hoped and prayed for. Small, very small did this movement begin. But it was undertaken from the best motives and with the highest aims, and the Lord has blest those devoted efforts, has multiplied the spirit of those first heroes, and has so guided this cause that, through its widening influence, unity and not factionalism is increasingly endorsed throughout the reviving Mennonite fraternity. Slow indeed has been the growth and progress. But it has been one steady forward march until it has now become the leading organized movement among Mennonites in America; and, stimulated by its example, Mennonites in all sections

are gradually adopting its ideas until, may God grant it, all factional lines among the Mennonites shall disappear, and brethren everywhere will co-operate in the furtherance of the Kingdom of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ. May we not rejoice at the blessings already ours! Shall we not take courage and press forward for still greater developments! Shall we not gratefully acknowledge the guidance of Him who maketh a people of those "which in times past were no people!"

Fourteenth General Conference. Held in Alexanderwohl Church, near Newton, Kan. 1896.

	Church.	*State.*	*Delegates.*	*Votes.*
1.	Loretta	S. Dakota	Cor. Ewert	2
2.	Salem (Ourtown)	"	Jos. Kaufmann, Chr. Mueller	10
3.	Summerfield	Illinois	C. van der Smissen, M. Pletcher	6
4.	Berne	Indiana	S. F. Sprunger, I. A. Sommer	17
5.	Emmanuel (Noble)	Iowa	H. G. Allebach	6
6.	Pulaski	"	J. B. Baer	6
7.	West Point	"	Chr. Schowalter	1
8.	Zion (Donnellson)	"	" "	5
9.	Alexanderwohl	Kansas	Jac. Buller, P. Unrau, A. Woelk, H. Goerz, Jac. Richert, H. Banmann, C. C. Wedel, Jac. Isaac, P. Unruh, P. Balzer.	18
10.	Bruderthal (Hillsboro)	"	W. J. Ewert, J. Funk, Jac.W. Penner, J. J. Friesen, P. Mouttet.	5
11.	Canton	"	Tob. Wedel, Tob. Unruh	2
12.	Christian	"	J. Beutler, B. Stucky, J. E. Stucky, J. L. Stucky, J. Schrag, Val. Krehbiel	6
13.	Emmaus	"	Ed. Claassen, G. Harder, J. Andres, S. Thierstein	4
14.	Garden Township	"	D. Eymann, Jac. Vogt, J. Lichti, Sr., S. Baumgartner	4
15.	Gnadenberg	"	J. Penner, H. P. Schmidt, H. J. Kliewer, J. J. Voth	5
16.	Halstead	"	C. Krehbiel, D. Goerz, J. E. Schmitt, D. Langenwalter, J. W. Ruth, D. Haury, J. Schroeder	7
17.	Hillsboro	"	J. S. Hirschler, H. B. Friesen	2
18.	Hoffnungsau	"	D. Gaeddert, A. Ratzlaff, P. Flaming, P. Goerz, C. Voth, P. Heidebrecht, J. Edinger, J. Voth, H. Janzen	9

	Church.	*State.*	*Delegates.*	*Votes.*
19.	Hoffnungsfeld-Eden	Kansas	P. Krehbiel, P. Stucky, Tob. Krehbiel	3
20.	Johannisthal I.	"	Joh. Gerbrand, H. H. Bartel, P. S. Schroeder	3
21.	Johannisthal II.	"	J. D. Bartel, Joh. Ploenert	2
22.	Newton	"	P. Klaassen, Joh. Epp, J. R. Toews, J. Toews, B. Regier, J. Busenitz, A. Quiring	7
23.	Pawnee Rock	"	Jac. Schmidt	3
24.	Pretty Prairie	"	J. G. Graber, P. A. Graber, J. Krehbiel, J. J. Graber	6
25.	Ransom	"	Jac. Aeby	1
26.	West Zion (Moundridge)	"	W. Galle, Jac. Galle, Jac. Rupp, D. Ruth, H. Dallke, D. J. Krehbiel.	6
27.	Whitewater	"	D. Gerber, Joh. Roth	2
28.	Zion (Elbing)	"	A. Regier, J. W. Regier	2
29.	Bethel (Mountain Lake).	Minnesota	H. Regier, J. J. Balzer, M. Franz, H. J. Fast, J. Toews, P. H. Frantz, J. F. Toews	7
30.	Salem (Butterfield)	"	F. D. Schroeder	2
31.	Bethel (Tipton)	Missouri	P. P. Lehmann, M. S. Moyer	5
32.	Beatrice	Nebraska	J. Penner, H. Wiebe, A. Wiebe, And. Wiebe, A. Riesen, J. Goosen.	6
33.	Henderson	"	P. J. Friesen, H. Epp	4
34.	Clarence Center	New York	Jac. Krehbiel	2
35.	Niagara Falls	"	" "	1
36.	Bluffton	Ohio	J. B. Baer, B. Diller, A. Zurfluh, J. Badertscher	29
37.	Canton	"	H. P. Krehbiel	3
38.	Salem (Dalton)	"	D. Kirchhofer	4
39.	Trenton	"	H. J. Krehbiel	7

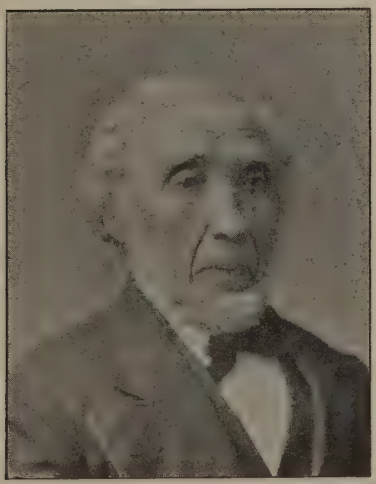
	Church.	*State.*	*Delegates.*	*Votes.*
40.	Wadsworth	Ohio	I. A. Sommer	5
41.	Bergthal (Shelly)	Oklahoma	D. Gaeddert	2
42.	Mennoville (Okarche)	"	Joel Sprunger	1
43.	Sichar (Shelly)	"	P. Pankratz	3
44.	Salem	Oregon	P. Althaus	2
45.	Bartolets	Pennsylvania.	W. S. Gottschall	1
46.	Baumannsville	"	" "	2
47.	Deep Run	"	Eli. Fretz	7
48.	East Swamp	"	A. B. Shelly, J. S. Moyer	4
49.	Flatland	"	A. B. Shelly	2
50.	Germantown	"	N. B. Grubb	1
51.	Hereford	"	A. S. Shelly	7
52.	Philadelphia	"	N. B. Grubb	13
53.	Pottstown	"	W. S. Gottschall	1
54.	Saucona	"	A. B. Shelly, J. S. Moyer	1
55.	Schwenksville	"	W. S. Gottschall	6
56.	Souderton	"	E. Fretz	3
57.	Springfield	"	A. B. Shelly, J. S. Moyer	4
58.	Upper Milford	"	A. S. Shelly	4
59.	West Swamp	"	A. B. Shelly, J. S. Moyer	7
60.	Colfax	Washington	J. B. Baer	2
			Total Votes	297

TABLE SHOWING WHAT CHURC

Church.	*Located in or near*	*Participat*					
		1859.	1860.	1861.	1863.	1866.	1869.
1. Zion	Donnellson, Lee Co., Iowa	1	1	1	1	1	1
2. West Point	West Point, Lee Co., Iowa	1	1	1	1	1	1
3. West Schwamm	Milford Square, Bucks Co., Pa	—	1	1	1	1	1
4. Polk City	Iowa	—	1	—	—	—	—
5. Summerfield	Summerfield, St. Clair Co., Ill	—	—	1	1	1	1
6. Milford (?)	Pennsylvania	—	—	1	1	1	—
7. Philadelphia	"	—	—	1	1	1	1
8. Wadsworth	Medina Co., Ohio	—	—	1	1	1	1
9. Waterloo	Canada	—	—	1	1	1	—
10. Boyertown	Pennsylvania	—	—	—	1	1	—
11. Springfield	Springfield, Pa	—	—	—	1	1	1
12. Schwenksville	Schwenksville, Pa	—	—	—	1	—	1
13. Hereford	Bally, Berks Co., Pa	—	—	—	1	1	1
14. Upper Milford	Zionsville, Lecha Co., Pa	—	—	—	1	—	1
15. An der Zwanzig	Canada	—	—	—	1	1	—
16. Salem	Haysville, Ashland Co., Ohio	—	—	—	—	1	1
17. Cleveland	Ohio	—	—	—	—	—	1
18. Salem	Dayton, Iowa	—	—	—	—	—	1

APPENDIX I.

BIOGRAPHIES.



DANIEL KREHBIEL.

As founder of the General Conference, biographical facts concerning Daniel Krehbiel will be of interest to every friend of that movement. He was born April 22, 1812, at Weierhof in upper Bavaria. His father, Jacob Krehbiel, was a prominent and influential member of the Mennonite church of that place. His mother's maiden name was Elizabeth Kapp. The usual educational advantages of that age were accorded him by his parents. His parents as well as the community in which he lived were godly people, and Daniel, when yet small, gave himself to God. His religious life deepened as he advanced in years, and at fourteen, upon his request, he

was baptized. Nor did he ever waver from his faith or from a godly life in after years. He early displayed mechanical tastes, which increased with the years, and he finally determined to learn the saddler's trade. Accordingly he became a saddler's apprentice and finished learning this trade in his nineteenth year.

He was now nearly of age for military service, and as that government granted no immunity to Mennonites from military service, he determined to emigrate to the United States. It was on the first of July, 1832, a Sunday, that he parted from his home to go to Kindenheim, where he was to meet with a company of emigrants. Being greatly beloved by the people of Weierhof, many accompanied him to the Rissingerberg, where they bade him a sad farewell.

In this country he made his first stopping place with relatives near Niagara Falls. Later he, for several years, worked at his trade in Buffalo, N. Y., then at Ashland and Cleveland, Ohio. In 1836 he set up business for himself in Williamsville, New York, in the neighborhood of which place he had relatives. On July 18, 1841, he married Mary Leisy, of Newburgh (near Cleveland, Ohio). He removed from Williamsville to Cleveland, Ohio, in 1846; a change which proved to his pecuniary advantage. However as there were only a few Mennonites in Cleveland, and these not organized into a church, he and his wife sadly missed the blessings which come from fellowship with those of kindred faith and spirit. Krehbiel sought to organize the Mennonites living there into a church, but all efforts in this direction failed. Unable to secure for himself and family church fellowship, he decided to remove to Iowa, where several of his broth-

ers, lately immigrated from Germany, had settled. So in 1856 he removed to West Point, Iowa, united with the Mennonite church of that place, and so found what he had so much longed for. Nine miles from West Point was the Zion Mennonite church, of which his brother Jacob was pastor. Krehbiel observed that these churches, the same as all other Mennonite churches at that time, stood in no further ecclesiastical relation to each other than that both were Mennonite churches. Earnestly pondering this situation, God put the thought into his heart that these two churches might make the beginning of a union of churches, and united, might do something in the way of mission work. Upon this thought he acted. He proposed the matter to others, and it found ready acceptance. A meeting of the two churches to consider this matter of union was called for the second day of Pentecost in the year 1859 in the Zion Church. After organizing the meeting with John C. Krehbiel as chairman and Chr. Schowalter as secretary, Daniel Krehbiel in an elaborate speech presented his ideas with regard to union and co-operation for the benefit of the churches themselves, as well as for the carrying on of mission work beyond their own limits. The outcome of the meeting was the call for a General Conference in 1860, which resulted ultimately in the organization of the now so prosperous movement, known as the General Conference of the Mennonites of North America. Through his correspondences, published in the "Volksblatt," he did very much to help this work along while in this early stage of incipiency, and it is more than probable that his personal acquaintance and friendship with the editor of the "Christliche Volksblatt", J. H. Oberholzer, helped

much to make the latter willing to attend the first meeting called for a conference.

Krehbiel had moved to Iowa with the expectation of making his permanent residence there, but family circumstances arose, which compelled him in 1862 to remove again to Cleveland, Ohio, and here he resided till the close of his life. But his active connection with the conference movement was not discontinued. The Conference of 1863 made him one of the building committee, in which he did faithful and useful service, on the one hand by his practical ideas as a business man, and on the other hand by stimulating the interest in the cause by pen and voice, and moving the church members to a willingness to supply the necessary funds for the realization of the undertaking. He was himself filled with a deep devotion to the whole cause, and he was able by his writings to awaken in others a similar enthusiasm. He labored and gave for the cause, forgetful of self.

When in 1872 the Conference undertook to carry on mission work, Daniel Krehbiel was elected its treasurer, and he was repeatedly re-elected until he resigned in 1881. He discharged this duty with scrupulous accuracy, as these funds were to him sacred, being donated to the Lord's cause. The debt on the conference school became so oppressive by 1876, that something must be done to relieve the strain. A general and large collection throughout all the churches was determined upon. As the school was at that time unpopular, it was foreseen that the task would be a delicate as well as difficult one. Few persons were qualified to perform it. But it was believed that it could be safely entrusted to Daniel Krehbiel. He, though reluctantly, undertook to do the

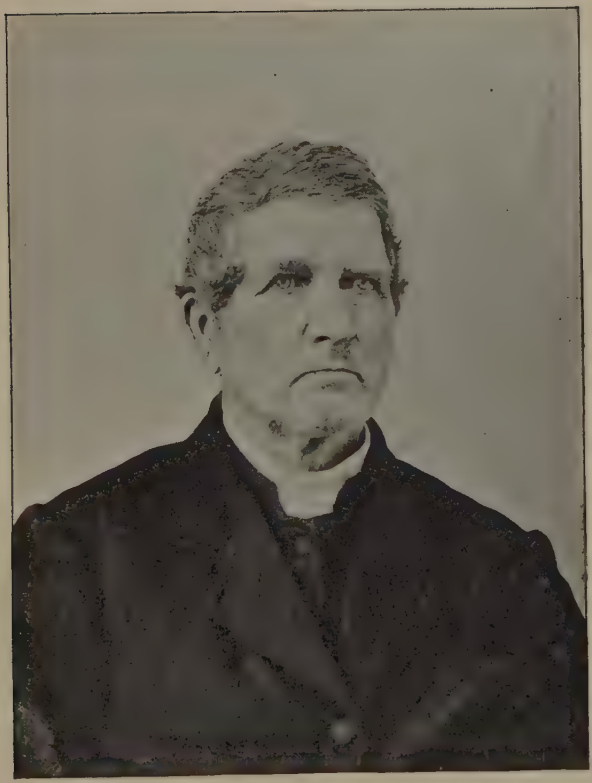
work, not shrinking because of his advanced years, believing it his duty to sacrifice personal comforts and ease, when the good of the Lord's cause demanded it. In his kindly, persuasive, yet persistent and energetic way, he performed this task in such a manner as to deserve lasting gratitude from the Mennonite denomination.

For a time he was seriously contemplating removal to Kansas, where in the midst of those extensive Mennonite settlements, he might pass his last days in congenial association with brethren of like faith, and be in daily touch with the broader movement of neighboring Mennonite churches, co-operating in mutual edification. With this idea in mind, he with his four daughters made a several months visit to the West in 1883. He was greatly pleased, yet the idea of removal was abandoned.

By nature Krehbiel was of a happy, hopeful, optimistic disposition, kindly of heart and earnestly desirous that the world might grow better and more like Christ. In his advancing years it was to him a source of constant delight to behold the gradual awakening among Mennonites, and it was his confident belief that this progress would steadily continue. With wistful eye he looked toward the future, desirous to see what good that held in store. At one time he wrote: "Sometimes, when I contemplate the awakening activities among Mennonites, the wish arises in me that the wheel of time might be turned back fifty years (that is so far as my own life is concerned), that I might see how things shall shape themselves during the next fifty years."

Krehbiel was blessed with good health and a strong constitution, and retained his physical and mental vigor to the close of his life, although his last years were

spent in quiet retirement. When already past seventy-five he made his last journey, attending in 1887 the Western District Conference at Dalton, Ohio, and afterwards the General Conference in Pennsylvania. On this journey he became ill. Under the loving care given him at his home he temporarily rallied from this attack, but after a short time he had a back-set, and on January 4, 1888, he peacefully passed away. The founder of the General Conference has gone to his reward. Well may the grateful Mennonite denomination rise up and call him blessed.



JOHN H. OBERHOLZER.

Great movements frequently owe much of their success to the efforts and abilities of a single individual. This is true of the unification movement among Mennonites in America. This broad and deep movement was pioneered by J. H. Oberholzer, and no other man has

done as much as he to create and develop the spirit of unity in the Mennonite denomination.

J. H. Oberholzer was born in Berks County, Pa., on January 10, 1809. His parents, Abraham and Susan (Hunsberger) Oberholzer, were farmers by occupation, and descendants of the early Mennonite settlers in Pennsylvania. They readily permitted their son to take advantage of the meager educational facilities the country then afforded. As he was fond of study, he made rapid progress, and when but sixteen years old, he began himself to teach, and thereafter followed this profession for fifteen years. But the school year then was short and the pay small, which forced Oberholzer to follow some additional occupation. He determined to become locksmith and accordingly learned this trade. It was by this trade that he supported himself for about thirty years; his ministerial services as well as his later journalistic enterprise being causes of expense rather than sources of income to him. He became very skillful in his trade and his locks found ready sale. In many dwellings erected at that time are still found some of the German locks manufactured by Oberholzer.

While yet young he had united with the Swamp Mennonite church. He was in the prime of his life when in 1842 this church chose him as co-pastor to their aged minister, Samuel Musselmann. The latter lived but a few years after this and so the whole charge fell to Oberholzer. He entered upon this calling with all the fervency of his soul, and devoted himself to this work without receiving any pecuniary assistance, as was then the custom. He was a fluent and fascinating speaker

and his popularity soon spread beyond his own church and denomination.

Oberholzer's life throughout was marked by action. As teacher he had learned to appreciate the value of instruction and training. On entering upon the ministry, he began at once to employ pedagogical methods in his church work, by introducing catechetical instruction for young people applying for admission to the church, and later on succeeded in inducing other churches to do the same. To aid in this work he re-published a catechism formerly used in Canada. Later on this catechetical instruction, which was given on Sundays, was made more general, all children being taken in, and thus this work gradually developed into a sunday school. As this was the first sunday school in any Mennonite church in America, Oberholzer stands also as the pioneer in this work.

In his efforts at upbuilding his church, he keenly felt the need of communication with and the help of others in the same work, especially such help as could be secured through a church periodical. He also clearly saw the potent influence for good, which such a paper could be made to exert if made the ally of the pulpit. But nothing of the kind then existed among Mennonites. Recognition of the want for Oberholzer meant the effort to satisfy it. Accordingly, with a sublime heroism, he purchased with his own hard earned and much needed money a printing press and set it up in his locksmith-shop. After learning how to set type, he undertook in addition to his ministerial and business duties to publish a paper. He did all the work himself. He was author, editor, compositor and printer. It required herculian

efforts to accomplish all he had undertaken. Of this work he at one place says, that not infrequently he labored whole nights in the printing office, without allowing himself any sleep, that he might supply the people with christian literature. His paper, of which the first number appeared June 9, 1852, at Milford, Bucks County, Pennsylvania, he called "Religioeser Botschafter." As this is the first Mennonite church paper published in this country, credit is also due to Oberholzer for having led the way to Mennonite Journalism. He continued his editorial work on this paper, though its name was later changed to "Christliches Volksblatt," until 1868.

Soon after Oberholzer entered upon the ministry, he saw that the ministerial meetings, held by Mennonite ministers of that section, were barren of good results, largely because of lack of system and aim, and because no records were kept. In order to improve the situation, he drew up a constitution, and in 1847 submitted it for consideration to a meeting of ministers, known as the Franconia Conference. This Conference, fearing this as an innovation, refused at two successive sessions even to consider the proposed constitution, and by a majority vote excluded Oberholzer, together with 16 other ministers, who had supported the plan, from their council, until they should recant. Recant they of course could not for they were not guilty of an error. When Oberholzer and the others saw themselves thus excluded, they determined to organize themselves under the rejected constitution. This they did on October 28, 1847. Of this organization, now known as the Eastern District Conference, Oberholzer continued for many years the leading spirit. He was permitted to see this work thoroughly

established and greatly increased, so that it has become by far the most efficient element in Mennonite life of eastern Pennsylvania.

When in 1872 Oberholzer resigned his position as Chairman of the Conference, a position he had held almost from the beginning, the following resolution was endorsed in the minutes of that meeting: "Dear brother Oberholzer! For a long time you have been at the head of our conferences as its leader. Many sad trials was it your lot to encounter. Often has the enemy threatened, not only from the world without, but even from the Conference and the inner circle of brotherhood, and sought to drive you from your position and to impugn your character. But by the grace of God you have, nothwithstanding all tricks of the enemy, remained calm and firm, and no harm has been permitted to come to you.

"We, the Eastern Conference, recognize and appreciate the blessings which God has showered upon us through you, and in gratitude we beseech the Lord richly to bless you."

Oberholzer had at no time desired separation, and at all times, after being isolated, had sought to restore unity. In this direction he made a special effort in 1860, by publishing a little book, in which he gives a partial account of his life, gives reasons why his excommunication should not have occurred, and in a most christian and loving spirit makes overtures for a restoration of fraternal relations. He wanted harmony and co-operation—not division. It was about this time, 1859 to 1860, that the general conference movement, begun in Iowa, came to Oberholzer's attention. Quick to see good points,

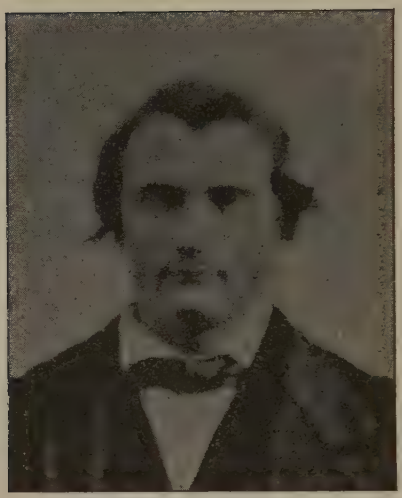
he recognized in that small beginning the principles upon which a broad unification could be effected. He promptly supported this movement through his paper, attended the next called meeting in 1860, and at once became the moving spirit, serving as its president for a number of years. Without his support it is not at all probable that the undertaking would have succeeded. Through him the Eastern Conference identified itself with the new movement and thus gave it strength. Through his paper the movement was brought to general attention. By his skill as organizer it gained form and stability.

In connection with this broader work Oberholzer supported all its early undertakings. The school at Wadsworth gained much from his personal influence as well as from his resourceful mind. When the Conference undertook to carry on Mission work, Oberholzer was made one of the first members of the Board, and continued in this position until 1881, and so helped to establish the mission among the Indians. He was at all times an ardent supporter of the mission cause and did much to cultivate a general interest in this work.

After Oberholzer had reached his sixty-fifth year, his strength began gradually to fail and he withdrew more and more from active work. But his deep interest in the cause, to which the strength of his life had been given, never ceased. He always kept well posted and was ever concerned for the welfare of every undertaking. When he had already attained the ripe age of seventy-five, he had the privilege of attending the session of the General Conference held in 1884 at Berne, Indiana. Three years later the conference session was held in his

own church in Pennsylvania. This was the last session he attended, of the movement he had been chiefly instrumental in creating. It was a source of great satisfaction to him to see the spirit of fraternity so greatly increased, and the participation in the good cause so multiplied. He continued to speak more or less in public until his end, and as late as October 1894, when already past his eighty-fifth year, he spoke at an evening service in his home church. After this his strength rapidly failed, and on February 15, 1895, he peacefully passed away. In the presence of an immense concourse of people his remains were interred five days later in the cemetery of the West Swamp Church.

Though no great monument marks the spot where he lies, he has a monument more lasting in the cause, for which he gave the best years of his life, and a grateful denomination will increasingly appreciate his great and noble life.



DANIEL HEGE.

Daniel Hege, like so many of the earlier workers in the General Conference, came from South Germany. He was born December 26, 1826, at Klein Karlbach, Upper Palatinate, Germany. His parents were John and Margaret (Bergtholdt) Hege. His father was miller by trade. The ancestors came to Germany from Switzerland about the year 1700 A. D.

Young Daniel began at six and attended the common schools until his fourteenth year, after which he spent a few years assisting his parents at home. When he had grown old enough for this, he was apprenticed to a merchant, but after a year or two he took up bookbinding and learnt this trade.

At the age of twenty-one he was fortunate enough to escape conscription for the army, and now he promptly entered upon a long cherished course of education. For five years he had been hoping that he might gain an education, and had been making plans for it. He entertained high aims and noble purposes. In 1849 he wrote to a friend: "For more than five years I have entertained the wish to do something for my fellowmen. My end and aim is to become a competent teacher, and at the same time a minister of the Gospel, upon whose labors divine blessings may rest." With the uncertainty of compulsory service in the army before him, he had deferred entering upon the cherished plans. But when he received word that he was free from military service, he immediately (1848) entered an academy at Schiers, Canton Graubunden, Switzerland. He entered upon the student's life with such zeal that his health broke down after ten months stay, and he was compelled to discontinue his work for six months or more. After recovery he spent another year at the same institution and completed the course there.

It was during this period that very many Mennonites emigrated from South Germany to the United States. Hege likewise proposed to make this country his future home, and had to a large extent selected his work and prepared himself with this in view. Accordingly after completing his work at Schiers he left for America in November 1851. After visiting with friends in Cleveland for a few weeks, he went to Cincinnati and spent the winter there. The next spring he went to Indiana and there staid for some months with his brother John. In the fall of 1852 he entered the Evangelical

Seminary at Marthasville, Mo., and for the three years following attended that institution, gaining thus a thorough education.

After completion of the course at Marthasville, he taught a private school near Bloomington, Ill., during 1855 to 1856. For some time during the latter year he also taught at West Point, Iowa. At this place he was ordained to the ministry October 12, 1856. During the winter, 1856—57 he was private instructor to three children near Oscaloosa, Iowa. After this he again returned to West Point, where he taught and preached for several years. On July 19, 1857, he was married to Barbara Lehmann. About the year 1859 the church at Summerfield, Ill., gave him a call to become their pastor, which call he accepted and soon entered upon this work with great zeal and devotion. He soon succeeded in stimulating the church to take interest in mission work and other large interests in the Lord's Kingdom.

In 1861 Hege attended the session of the General Conference at Wadsworth. He was chosen secretary, and afterwards was selected as home missionary and solicitor for the proposed conference shool. In May of 1862 he entered upon this special task, and for seven months pushed this work with great vigor and with remarkable success, as told in detail in the narrative of this volume. Perhaps from too great a strain on his nervous system he was taken ill on his return from Iowa to Summerfield, and on December 30, 1862, was called to his reward. He labored with great devotion and unselfishness for the upbuilding of the Lord's Kingdom, and the fruits of his labors are still maturing to the good of his chosen denomination and the glory of God.

CHRISTIAN SCHOWALTER.

Of those persons who participated in the formation of the General Conference but few remain. Of those who were leaders and to whom special duties were assigned, but one, Christian Schowalter, remains at the present writing.

Christian Schowalter was born on November 11, 1828, at Assenheim, Bavaria, Germany. His parents were John and Magdalena (Hierstein) Schowalter. Their ancestry traces back to Switzerland, where they were identified with the baptistic (Mennonite) movement as

early as the time of the reformation. During the heartless persecutions three brothers, John, Jacob, and Christian Schowalter, left Switzerland, and after much suffering settled near Weissenburg, Alsatia, and became tenants on the manor Schafbach, and later also the manor Gaisberg. To one of those brothers Christian Schowalter traces his decent.

Schowalter's parents were only in moderate circumstances financially, but as their son Christian showed inclination to study, they gave him unusual educational advantages for those days. From his sixth to his fourteenth year he attended the public schools, held eight months in the year. For a few years after this he was employed on his father's farm. In the spring of 1845, when in his seventeenth year, he was sent to the school at Beugen, where he studied for two years. After this he for three years attended a normal school at Schiers, graduating from this institution in July, 1849. After having taught for one year at Deutschhof in Bavaria, he received a call from the Mennonite church at Haysville, Ohio, to come and teach their school. The call was accepted, and in the fall of 1850 Schowalter, now 22 years old, emigrated to America, together with a number of Mennonite families, there being seventy-two persons in all in the emigrating company.

For three years Schowalter taught the school at Haysville. Receiving now an invitation from the Zion Mennonite Church near Donnellson in Lee County, Ia., to become their teacher, he accepted this call, and arrived at that place on June 8, 1853. In this same year he began his work as teacher of the parochial school, and with the exception of two years continued for thirty-six successive

years in this position. At this place he became acquainted with Rosina Heffner, with whom he was married on October 25, 1855.

When during 1858 and before, the matter of closer organization and co-operation between the neighboring Mennonites was agitated, Schowalter was among the promoters of this idea, and when in 1859 the agitation resulted in a preliminary meeting for union, Schowalter as teacher was naturally chosen as secretary of the meeting. With the exception of one meeting, he has up to the present time served as secretary at every session of the General Conference, which grew out of that first meeting.

In 1861, John Krehbiel II., the pastor of the Zion church had died. In the selection of a successor Schowalter was chosen by lot. He began to preach on Christmas of 1861, and was ordained to the full ministry by David Ruth in the following year. From this time forward he labored in the double capacity of teacher and minister. He always received more or less support from the church for his services; but in order to make ends meet in the maintainance of his growing family, he found it necessary to do farming on a small scale. In his work with his congregation Schowalter may well be called progressive. While yet only teacher, he had interested the young people of the church in music, and had by regular drill raised the standard of music far above what was then common in this country. Later on he introduced the Sunday school, and has from the first been an ardent worker in this form of christian activity. When the Young People Societies appeared, he though now old

himself, quickly saw the utility of this organization and opened the doors of his church to it.

Being identified with the conference movement from the beginning, he has been an important factor in all its undertakings. After 1864 the institutional side of the conference school undertaking depended almost entirely upon him. He mapped out the course of instruction, and laid down the principles according to which the school should be conducted, and finally his companions on the school committee, prevailed upon him to accept the principalship of the school. He reluctantly accepted after still more reluctant consent by his church, and opened the school at Wadsworth, Ohio, on January 2, 1868, and conducted it with good success until October 1869. Upon severing his connections with the school, Schowalter made a trip to Germany with his family, and then returned to his charge in Iowa, which was very desirous that he should again take up the work among them.

Schowalter was one of a committee appointed by the conference in 1871, to draw up a catechism for use in the conference churches. The other members of the committee requested Schowalter to do this work, and he consented. His work was found acceptable by the Conference of 1881. This catechism was published, and is now extensively used in German speaking Mennonite churches.

By a formerly existing rule of the Conference, the secretary of the Conference, by virtue of his office, was also a member of the Foreign Mission Board. Hence Schowalter has through all the missionary activity of the Conference been directly connected with the manage-

ment of this enterprise, and has in various ways helped the cause along. While the Mission Board published the little mission paper "Nachrichten aus der Heidenwelt," Schowalter served as editor of the Children's Department of this paper, and succeeded in stimulating much enthusiasm among the little ones to help the mission work along by their mites. He is still connected with the Mission Board, and in the reorganization of the committee in 1896 was chosen its president.

Schowalter has frequently written for the church periodicals, travelled much in the interest of union and co-operation, and by his humor, vivacity and kindliness, as well as by his zealous spirit for God's cause, has contributed much to the general upbuilding of the unification movement among Mennonites in America. At the advanced age of seventy he is still one of the stalwart supporters of the cause he has been identified with from the beginning, and those, who have since come into the work, hope that he may still be with them when the good cause rounds out its semi-centennial.

A. B. SHELLY.

Andrew B. Shelly is the oldest child and only son of Joseph S. and Elizabeth (Bauer) Shelly. He was born in Milford Township, Bucks Co., Pa., on September 23, 1834. He is a descendant of Abraham Shelly, who with his two brothers immigrated to this country

from Switzerland about the year 1700, and settled in the county already mentioned. This Abraham Shelly was the great-great-great-grandfather of Andrew B. Shelly on both his father's and mother's side.

Very early in life the subject of this sketch manifested a love for study, and being endowed by the Creator with an inquisitive and observing mind, he early obtained a store of useful knowledge. At the age of seven he began attending the parochial school, conducted by the church to which his parents belonged. When later the parochial schools were superseded by the public schools, he attended these for serveral months during winter, the remainder of the year being spent at work on his father's farm. But farm work was not permitted to crowd out mental development, for the studies were privately kept up during the summer. This alternating between school in winter and farm work in summer continued until he was nineteen years old, when be began to teach. After having taught one term of about five months, he attended an academy for nine months, profiting much by this. He afterwards again taught during several winters both in public and private schools, and worked on the farm during the summer season, until 1863, when he dropped the teacher's profession and devoted himself exclusively to farming. He however never ceased studying, and even while busily engaged with farm work, he always kept some literary work under way, and all his spare moments were devoted to reading and study.

In the spring of 1857 the church, of which he had become a member in 1854, organized a sunday school and elected him superintendent. This was the first sun-

day school in any Mennonite church in America. A. B. Shelly therefore has the honor of being the pioneer sunday school superintendent among Mennonites. The sunday school prospered and it still continues. At first it was held only during the summer months, but very soon it was held the year round. Shelly early introduced weekly Teacher's Meetings with good results. To the position of superintendent he was annually reelected for a number of years even after he had been called to the ministry.

Being deeply imbued with the spirit of God, Shelly at a very early age felt an inward calling to the Gospel ministry, and believed that at some time the Lord would call him into His service. This time arrived when, in the spring of 1864, the West Swamp Church, of which he had become a member ten years before, elected him as co-pastor to serve with J. H. Oberholzer, the elder of the church. On Good Friday, March 25, 1864, the ordination occurred, and two days later he preached his first sermon, taking as his text Luk. 24 : 26. Soon afterwards he was called upon to preach regularly every Sunday. His position as co-pastor he retained until August 22, 1872, when he was ordained to the full ministry, and the care of the whole church was entrusted to him.

Being thus closely associated with J. H. Oberholzer, he naturally became somewhat acquainted with the editorial work on the Christliche Volksblatt which Oberholzer carried on. Occasionally Shelly had written contributions for this paper, and for a short time during 1866, when the editor was away from home, he conducted the editorial work. In the following year he was elected editor of this paper. Upon his taking charge of the

paper its form was changed from a four to an eight page sheet, and for the name "Christliche Volksblatt" that of "Mennonitische Friedensbote" was substituted. For five successive years he was re-elected editor by the Mennonite Printing Union. When in 1871 the publication of the Friedensbote was transferred to the Eastern Mennonite Conference, Shelly was retained as editor. For ten years more he occupied this important position. After this, when in December 1881 the Friedensbote was merged into the Christliche Bundesbote, he served as editor of the Eastern Department of the latter until December 1884. The fifteen years during which Shelly served as editor, covered the most important part of the formative period of the unification movement among the Mennonites. Wisdom, prudence, foresight, firmness, self-control, unselfishness, were qualities called for by the situation, and these are all very happily combined in Shelly. By his many timely articles he has often turned the scale in favor of some worthy cause, and many a storm has been averted by the prudent course and tempered tone of his paper. His is an invaluable service which he has been permitted by the grace of God to render to the Mennonite denomination.

Being a careful observer, Shelly noticed that the growing generation was not in touch with the denominational life, because of their inability to read German. He therefore advocated the establishment of an English church paper. Others soon united with him in promoting this new project, until in October 1885, the Eastern Conference undertook to publish such a paper. Shelly was elected a member of the publication and editing committee. This position he still holds. His particular

work is the editing of the Mission Department and Church News, and the management of the business of the paper.

When yet a very young man, Shelly had advocated the formation of a General Conference, and under an assumed name had written articles in the interest of such a movement. When therefore in 1860 the General Conference was actually formed, he naturally took a deep interest in it. What caused him to have special interest in this movement was that it from the beginning aimed to create a better educated ministry, to take more aggressive steps in regard to mission work, and to bring about a union of the scattered and divided members of the flock. The first General Conference which Shelly attended was that held at Wadsworth, O., in October 1866. The conference school was dedicated at this time, and he was one of the principal speakers. He has attended every session since. During the session of 1869 he served as a member of the business committee and at the next session, held in 1872, he was chosen to the responsible position of president of the General Conference. This position he occupied by repeated re-election until 1896. The qualities which so well fitted him for the editorial work were also in evidence in the chair. By wisdom, kindness and firmness he was able to conduct the meetings with dignity and dispatch to the satisfaction of all.

By virtue of his office as president of the Conference, he became a member of the Foreign Mission Board. About 1889 he became secretary of the Board, which position he still holds.

Shelly's connection with the General Conference and the Foreign Mission Board occasioned a number

of journeys to distant places. Besides the trips to the various sessions of the General Conference, he attended several special meetings of the Mission Board, held in the west, made two visits to the mission station in Oklahoma, and in 1891 attended and assisted in organizing the Northern District Conference at Mountain Lake, Minnesota. Being always a friend and staunch supporter of the educational interests among Mennonites, he was invited by the officers of the Bethel College Association to officiate at the laying of the corner-stone of Bethel College, at Newton, Kansas. He accepted, and in October 1888, in the presence of a great multitude, performed that ceremony.

Although already past his sixty-third year, Shelly is still in robust health, and continues vigorously in the work to which the Lord has called him. Besides attending as its secretary to the voluminous correspondence of the Mission Board, and performing the editorial work on the "Mennonite", he attends to the ministerial and pastoral duties of his charge, which is divided into three sections, situated at some distance from each other. Every Sunday he preaches in two, and often in all three of these, which necessitates a drive through the country of from six to twelve miles, and this he always does, braving all kinds of weather. Thus useful at home and abroad, this faithful servant is still at work, a steadfast supporter of the cause he has espoused.

CHRISTIAN KREHBIEL.

Prominent among those to whom the General Conference is indebted is Christian Krehbiel. He was born on October 18, 1832, at Weierhof, a small village romantically located at the foot of the Donnersberg in the Bavarian Palatinate. His parents, well to do farmers people, were John and Katharine Krehbiel. The ancestry, like that of most Mennonites in southern Germany, traces back to Switzerland. Under pressure of persecution one Jost Krehbiel (Kraehenbuehel) left Switzerland about 1671 and settled in southern Germany. To him in the sixth generation Christian Krehbiel traces his descent. Beginning with his sixth year, he attended the good schools of that section until his eleventh year, when his parents removed to Einhoffen in upper Bavaria, 25

miles from Munich. The school which he there attended for three years was very inferior. At fourteen attendance upon school ceased, except at a certain Sunday school, upon which attendance was required by law, until the seventeenth year. He was not a brilliant student at school. It was always hard for him to memorize, but that sort of exercise was then chiefly employed. But while literary training did not take so well with him, he nevertheless developed in mind by other educational influences. Chief among these was the educating conversations, which were carried on by the many visitors at the parental home, and to which he always was a most attentive listener. Religion, morals, travel and practical affairs, all formed topics of conversation and discussion, and no doubt the scope of thought and the knowledge of affairs which later characterized the man, trace their beginning to these early days of the then eagerly listening boy.

After having lived in Bavaria for seven years, a brother, older than he, was drafted for military service. Being faithful adherants to the doctrine of non-resistance, the parents were anxious to shield their sons from military service. Accordingly they sold their farm at a great sacrifice, paid a thousand Gulden for the release of their son from service, and in the spring of 1851, left the old homestead for America. A number of families immigrated together. The company made a temporary stop of nine months near Haysville, Ashland County, Ohio. During the summer of that year Christian Krehbiel worked on a farm. The place for ultimate settlement selected for the company was southeastern Iowa. To prepare somewhat for the coming of the families, Krehbiel, now nineteen years old, and another young man proceeded

to Iowa in the fall of 1851. They went to Cincinnati, then a small village, there took steamboat and went down the Ohio river to Cairo, Ill., then up the Mississippi to Keokuk, Iowa. It was during this trip that Krehbiel's independent activity began, when youth was changed to manhood.

The place of settlement in Iowa was Lee County. A few families of Mennonites had then already settled here. Upon his arrival Krehbiel hired for a year to one of these at 100 dollars. The following spring his parents and the rest of the company followed. During several years succeeding, Krehbiel was engaged in regular frontier work, cutting down the primeval forest and opening the soil to tillage. It was hard work, and life was plain in the simple loghouse they themselves had built. The great sacrifices made to get away from Europe, and to deliver the sons from military service had reduced the family to slender means. But his active mind, associated with others equally active, did not suffer, and religious interest was kept up by a rapidly growing and live church.

After six years he with his brothers had succeeded in clearing the homestead for the parents. All Krehbiel had earned up to this time had gone to his parents. Only now that the parents were provided for did he begin to look out for himself. On March 14, 1858, he was married to Susan A. Ruth, daughter of the minister David Ruth. For two years he now lived with his father-in-law. During the first year he was very sorely tried. He was taken with an eye trouble which necessitated his remaining in a dark room for several months, and for some time his sight was so poor that it was feared he

would become permanently blind. The Lord, however, granted recovery, his eyes suffering but slight permanent impairment. It was about this time that a settlement was begun by Mennonites from south Germany at Summerfield, Ill. Believing that section to have climatic and other advantages over Iowa, Krehbiel removed to that place in March 1860. Here as in Iowa he followed farming as an occupation. During his nineteen years residence in that section he lived on four different farms. Beginning with almost nothing, by 1867 he, through industry, thrift and God's blessing had gained enough to own a nice farm, directly adjacent to the little village of Summerfield, on which he resided for twelve years.

Krehbiel's life was, however, not destined to run the quiet course of a purely agricultural pursuit. In September of 1864 he was drafted to serve in the United States army. From this service he was personally relieved by hiring a substitute. Two months later, the pastor of the church, Daniel Hege, having died, he was elected to the ministry. This gave a new direction to his life and opened the door to a most active and varied career. At the General Conference, held at Summerfield in 1863, he had already been a participant as a lay-member.[1] He took part in the discussions,

[1] Krehbiel has been in intimate touch with the Conference movement from the time of its inception. He was himself a member of the Zion Church, where the preliminary meeting for the organization of a General Conference was held in 1859. Daniel Krehbiel, the founder of the Conference, was his uncle, as was also Jacob Krehbiel, the pastor of that church. John C. Krehbiel, pastor of the church at West Point, was his second cousin. David Ruth, his father-in-law, was co-pastor in the Zion Church, and finally his father was a deacon in this same church.

and it was at his suggestion that Ohio was selected as the place at which to locate the contemplated school of the Conference. By his election to the ministry he naturally came into more immediate relation to the General Conference, and has since then been a participant in every session of that body. At the dedication services in 1866 of the conference school at Wadsworth, he preached the first sermon with stirring effect. Three years later, when in 1869 the tension had arisen between the members of the faculty, it was through his intermediation that disaffection was averted, and to him was intrusted the delicate task of personally visiting the Zion church in Iowa, and winning their consent to Schowalter's continuation at Wadsworth.

The Western District Conference, which met for the first time in the Zion church, Iowa, in October 1868, was originated by Christian Krehbiel, he having first conceived and proposed the idea, and agitated the matter until the conference was realized. For a number of years he served as home missionary of that body, and was always a leader in the work. It was about this time also that he originated the idea of a Mennonite colony, to be founded in the West, and for which he labored for a number of years, until his hopes and efforts materialized in the settlement in Harvey and McPherson County, Kansas, with Halstead as headquarters; he being leader of this entire movement. As early as 1870 he had been in correspondence with European Mennonites who contemplated immigration to America. In 1872 four young men from Russia came to see him at Summerfield. Later other delegations came to consult with him, until he was in touch with all the leaders of the various

immigrating churches, and Summerfield for several years became the first objective point for Mennonite immigrants to this country; many families taking up temporary residence there until they could make final selection for settlement. He took hold of the immigration problem and devised plans for the most successful settlement in this country. It was through him that the Mennonite Board of Guardians was originated, and he as president formulated its plans and directed its activity. Through this committee great pecuniary savings were gained for the immigrants, much annoyance and hardship was averted, and many poor Mennonites, who would otherwise have been unable to come over, were enabled to come to this country.

In 1871 missionary interest had been greatly stimulated. Haury, student at the conference school and member of Krehbiel's church, had announced his intention to become missionary. However the expectation to carry on mission work through the Conference was almost defeated by Haury offering himself to the Amsterdam Mission Society. It was through Krehbiel that this was changed, that Haury offered himself as missionary to the Conference, and that the Conference entered upon an independent Mission enterprise, to the good of the Conference itself and the blessing of the Indians. In 1872 the Conference created the Foreign Mission Department. Krehbiel was elected a member of this Board, and the Board in organizing elected him to the presidency, in which capacity he served for twenty-four years, and planned and guided the actual mission work as carried on in the field. Living close to the mission field he often visited it, and he made it a point to be familiar with

all its details. Under his strong and wise guidance the work overcame all the many trials which beset it, and by his resourceful mind the constantly increasing demands as well as the ever varying situations were met. The conference mission under his guidance experienced a steady, rapid growth and never retrogressed, but every valuable position once gained was held, until the Mennonite mission ranked as one of the best of all missions among the Indians in the United States.

In March 1875 he had presided at the organization of the church at Halstead Kansas; this church being an offspring of the church at Summerfield. In March, 1879, he removed with his family to this place and settled on a farm adjacent to the town. In the fall preceding, the church at Halstead, knowing of his intention to remove to this place, had elected him their pastor. He had assisted in the organization of the Kansas Conference in 1877, and residing now in this district he spent much of his time visiting among the churches and developing the spirit of co-operation. He was among those who promoted the plan of a school for Kansas, and when the Kansas Conference decided to permanently carry on a school, it was through his influence that the Halstead church made her very liberal offer to furnish the buildings for the school. In connection with this school the Mission Board tried for two years to carry on an Indian Industrial school. When it proved only partially successful, Krehbiel undertook to carry on this school himself, and accordingly established it on his farm in 1887, and conducted it until 1896. About one hundred and fifty different Indian children came under his personal influence and care during this time, many of whom are

now among the most promising young men and women in the mission field.

Foreseeing that the United States Government was about to make such changes as would make the industrial school with the Indians impossible, he had in 1884 interested some others and organized the Mennonite Orphan Aid Society. Of this society he is president, and the institution is located at his home, he being its superintendent. There are now seventeen orphan children in this home ; for many other children homes have been secured in christian families through the institution.

Occasioned through these various labors, Krehbiel has travelled very much. To enumerate the various trips in so brief a sketch of an intensely active and busy life is impossible. Suffice it to say that he made over fifty extended journeys, all of which were made in the interest of the Conference or in behalf of others, and not for personal advantage ; all of course without compensation.

Though at this writing Krehbiel is past his sixty-fifth year, he still pursues his altruistic efforts with unabated vigor, his chief care at present being his pastorate of the church at Halstead and the orphanage at his home.

C. J. VAN DER SMISSEN.

Carl Justus van der Smissen was born July 14, 1811, near Altona, in Holstein, Germany. His parents were Jacob and Wilhelmine (Wiebe) van der Smissen. During the early years of his youth his parents resided in Hanerau and Friedrichstadt. By his pious mother he was early directed to his Saviour, and when very young

he gave his heart to him. Until his 15th year he received instruction from a private teacher and from his father, who was a minister. In that year he entered an academy at Ratzeburg, where he studied for several years. After his return home he again received private instruction in the classic languages from a minister.

In the year 1826 he, with his parents, removed to Danzig, in Prussia, to which place his father had received a call as minister. It was about this time that the old and extensive business house of the van der Smissen family failed through depredations among their trading vessels at sea and destructive wars at home.

This changed situation also affected the course of life of young Carl Justus. For lack of funds, attendance upon school had to cease for the present. He decided to learn a trade and, having chosen that of bookbinding, he served an apprenticeship of three and one half years. After having served his time, upon the advice of John Gossner of missionary fame, he journeyed to St. Petersburg, Russia, and there worked at his trade for a time. During his stay there he was socially in close touch with the friends of Gossner residing at that place.

Upon his return to Danzig he was taken with an eyetrouble which prevented him from working at his trade. Upon medical advise he went to the mountains of Silesia. Here an uncle of his met him and began to urge that he should prepare for the ministry, in which case he would pay his board. At first van der Smissen declined, but his eyetrouble having later been healed and all his friends and relatives urging him, he accepted the offer of his uncle. Basel in Switzerland was the school selected by his uncle. This institution he entered

in 1832, and studied there for three years. After this he studied for two years at the University of Erlangen. As the congregation at Friedrichstadt, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany, at this time had no minister, they elected van der Smissen. He accepted the call. On October 15, 1837, he was ordained to the ministry by his father at Neustadt, Godens. After having been married to Sarah van der Smissen on December 27, 1837, he in the beginning of the following year entered upon his ministerial duties.

Religious life was at low ebb when van der Smissen began his work there. For several years he labored faithfully to awaken more spirituality, and at last his labors were rewarded. A new spirit came among the people, though no striking conversions occurred at any time. This enjoyable condition was jarred and broken up by a war in 1848 to 1851, in which Friedrichstadt formed a particularly prominent center of combat. In 1850 van der Smissen was compelled to flee with his family for safety. They went to Hamburg. Leaving his family at Hamburg, van der Smissen returned in the following year, and in the midst of the devastation, did what he could to care for the remnant of his scattered flock. After peace was established, the family joined him again, and the work went on as before. But the spiritual interest manifested before the war could never be regained.

In 1862 the twenty-fifth anniversary of his ministry as well as the silver wedding was celebrated. Five years later the call came from the General Conference for van der Smissen to become theological professor at Wadsworth. At first this call was declined, but when it was

repeated in the following year, and all his friends advised acceptance, he yielded—believing it a call from God which demanded obedience from him. The immigration to America occurred the same year, and in the last days of 1868 he with his family arrived at Wadsworth. For ten years he was connected with the General Conference school at Wadsworth, during which time he did the most important work of his life. The deep and lasting impressions for good which he made upon the students are still bearing abundant fruitage to the glory of God and the blessing of man. All that came in touch with him felt the nobility of his soul and were the better men because of it.

In the spring of 1879 he removed to Haysville, Ashland Co., O., to his son, who was minister of the Salem church at that place. Not long after, the son resigned to take a charge elsewhere, and the Salem church called van der Smissen to the pastorate.

When the General Conference organized its Foreign Mission Department van der Smissen was elected one of the original members, and the Board elected him as secretary. In this position he did very important and useful service, in developing the missionary spirit among the churches, as well as in directing the mission work into proper channels of activity. Of the mission paper, which the Conference for several years published, van der Smissen was the editor, and succeeded in making that little periodical do useful service to the mission cause.

In the year 1885, after seventeen years' residence in America, he with his wife and daughter re-visited Europe, his former home and field of labor. Everywhere a most

cordial reception was given him. To the man now weighed down with years it was a season of great refreshing once more to visit the places where the years of his youth and strength were spent, to meet once more the friends of his former days. His return to his charge at Haysville was made an occasion of happiness by a special reception prepared by members of his flock.

The fiftieth anniversary of his ministerial service was made the occasion of another season of gladness. From his friends beyond the ocean, as well as from those on this side, came many congratulatory letters. Surrounded by several members of his family, and receiving frequent visits from others, the last years of his life flowed quietly and contentedly away. In his pastoral work he remained active almost to the close of life, which occurred on May 29, 1890. The blessed influences, which he was permitted to exert, are still felt, and are quietly at work, lifting men and women to a higher standard of piety and closer to the heart of God.

EPHRAIM HUNSBERGER.

Ephraim Hunsberger was born November 18, 1814, in Montgomery County, Pa. His father, Abraham Hunsberger, was a teacher, and from him he received his education, instruction being given in both German and English. He learned the trade of carriage making. December 25, 1838, he married Esther Bechtel. In 1849 he was chosen minister of the Hereford congregation by lot, and was ordained by J. H. Oberholzer. In 1852 he removed to Medina County, Ohio, where he organized a church which soon prospered. Sunday school he organized in 1856. The General Conference met in Hunsberger's church in 1861. In 1863 the Conference decided to build a school, and Hunsberger was made one of the building committee. The committee selected a site at Wadsworth, and appointed Hunsberger as overseer. In 1866 the building was dedicated, and the conference elected Hunsberger to serve as President of the Board of Supervisors of the school.

Hunsberger had always preached in German. As time went on, the growing generation no longer learned the German, and so there arose a demand for English preaching. To meet this want N. C. Hirschy was called in 1872 to assist Hunsberger. With the years now weighing heavily upon him, Hunsberger has retired from active work, and is passing his last days quietly in a happy home circle.

HENRY RICHERT.

Henry Richert was born near Danzig, Prussia, on May 23, 1831. Before he was one year old, his parents emigrated to Russia and settled in the village Alexanderwohl, in the large Mennonite colony on the Molotschna river. His educational opportunities in early life were very limited. Later his father, though a man of small means, sent him for several years to the school at Lichtfeld. In 1851 he was elected teacher for the village of Nikolai. In 1859 he was chosen as assistant pastor. Spiritual life in this church was at low ebb at this time. Richert in a quiet, manly way set out to improve conditions. He met with many obstacles and much opposition. But gradually conservatism gave way and the church entered upon a course of progress. Music, education, mission, all of which were formerly opposed, were now given constantly increasing attention. One of the fruits of this progress was that Henry Dirks, a member of this church, offered himself for missionary services.

The pay given to teachers was very small, and Richert, being poor, found it difficult to support his growing family. He was thankful therefore when in 1850 he was elected teacher for the school at Gnadenheim, the income here being about 500 Rubels annually. He continued teaching and preaching until 1874, during which time his beneficent influence upon church and community constantly increased, while his popularity as a minister and adviser spread into other churches.

When the emigration to America began, he was one of the first to go, and in 1874 he settled with his family 15 miles north of Newton, Kansas. Here he no longer taught, but supported himself by farming. However, he continued his labors as a minister of the Alexanderwohl congregation which had come over with him.

Richert early discovered the General Conference to be the progressive movement among Mennonites in America, and he soon induced his congregation to unite with this organization. The Conference at once elected him a member of the Foreign Mission Board, and in this capacity he for many years was a wise and helpful counselor.

When yet in the prime of strength and in the midst of an expanding lifework, his usefulness was suddenly interrupted in the fall of 1890, by a stroke of apoplexy. His left side was partially lamed. After some months he began gradually to regain strength, and for several years was again enabled to be about and share somewhat in the activities of life, when on October 12, 1895, a second stroke lamed his whole body, and four days later he quietly passed away. But the beneficent influence of his earnest life still rests as a benediction upon his congregation, and denomination at large.

LEONHARD SUDERMANN.

Leonhard Sudermann was born near Marienburg, in West Prussia, on April 21, 1821. His ancestry traces back to Holland. He received common school education until his fourteenth year. For five years following he worked on a farm and in 1841 he removed to Berdiansk, Russia. In 1859 he was elected to the ministry and in 1865 was made a bishop. He felt intensely the great responsibility of preaching. For a number of years he wrote all his sermons, then committed them and delivered them from memory. He introduced a sunday school in his church ; this being one of the first sunday schools in Russia.

When the decree of universal compulsory military service was issued, Sudermann was one of a delegation sent to the imperial government at St. Petersburg to learn how this law would affect the Mennonites. He was sent a second and third time in 1871. When it became evident that the Mennonites would not be exempted, emigration was agreed upon, and Sudermann was made one of a delegation of twelve to visit America. This tour was made in 1873. On their return trip across the ocean they were almost wrecked. In 1876 he emigrated to America, living first for six months in Summerfield, Ill., and then settling in Butler County, Kansas, where many of his members also settled and organized a church, of which Sudermann is still the pastor.

SAMUEL F. SPRUNGER.

Samuel Ferdinand Sprunger was born October 19, 1848 at Muensterberg, Canton Bern, Switzerland. In 1852 his parents, Abraham and Magdalena (Rufenacht) Sprunger, emigrated to America and settled on a farm, in the woods of Indiana, one mile south of the present village of Berne. Here young Samuel spent the early years of his life, subject to the many hardships and privations of frontier life. Until his twelfth year he remained at home, after which he was hired out to others, as his father discontinued farming. Until his twentieth year his educational privileges were extremely limited, for he attended common schools for only five very short terms. Nevertheless his active and acquisitive mind was not prevented from progressing. Being naturally gifted, and taking much interest in religious matters, he came to be held in such esteem by his fellow church members, that they elected him as an assistant minister in their church at the early age of twenty. He, however, felt the need of special preparation for this sacred duty, and agreed to take up this work only on condition of first attending school for some time. Accordingly he entered the conference school at Wadsworth, Ohio, in the fall of 1868, and there completed the three years theological course; he being among the first graduates from that institution. After the completion of his studies he returned to Berne, and took up the work of the ministry to which he had already been ordained on August 23, 1868. To the full ministry he was ordained March 4, 1874 by Chr. Kreh-

biel. In 1872 he bad been married to Katherina Lugenbiehl. Because of progressive ideas which he advocated, a division occurred in the church, and for a time only a few members stood by him. But gradually others came to see that he was right. Slowly at first the number increased, but after about ten years the whole church was again united. Ever since the membership has been steadily increasing, until it now exceeds five hundred. Under his care the church has gradually developed into one of the most active and progressive congregations among Mennonites in America.

Sprunger's activities have by no means been confined to his own church. He has served on various committees of the General Conference, has had charge of the business of the publication for a number of years, has for a long time successfully edited the Bundes-Bote Kalender and the Lektionshefte and has been a leader in the work of the Middle District Conference, of which at the present time (1898) he is president.

In 1891 he made a tour to Europe, visiting churches in Switzerland and South Germany, and attending in the latter country the Conference held at Sembach, besides enjoying much that is noteworthy in various sections of Europe.

The church, in which Sprunger preaches, is situated in the village of Berne, and his own residence is pleasantly located near the church. As one of God's faithful shepherds, he continues carefully to feed his flock.

JOHN B. BAER.

Prominent among the present workers of the General Conference is John B. Baer. He was born May 19, 1854, near O'Fallon, in St. Clair Co., Illinois. His parents were Christian and Katherine (Berger) Baer. A few years before the birth of their son they had immigrated to this country from Bavaria, South Germany; their ancestors having come from Switzerland and settled there. When their son John was several years old, his parents removed to a farm near Summerfield, Ills., and united with the Mennonite congregation of that place. J. B. Baer enjoyed the great blessing of a thoroughly christian home. His mother, who still lives, is deeply spiritual, of a poetic turn of mind; many of her verses having been published in the Volksblatt, Friedensbote and Bundesbote. Growing up in this spiritual atmosphere, Baer early leaned toward things godly, and as the years passed away this state of mind and heart steadily deepened.

Baer's educational advantages in early life were very limited. He began to attend school in his eighth year, and for several years attended the public school in winter, and the german parochial school in summer. Attendance, however, was not regular, and usually the terms could not be attended in full, as his father needed him on the farm. At about his twelfth year attendance upon school ceased altogether, and for a number of years he worked hard on the farm. But in his eighteenth year conditions changed for the better. The conference school was now in successful operation, and he was permitted

to attend this institution for one year, 1871 to 1872. That one year opened before his eyes the wide possibilities of a life. Though he remained at home for several years following, his spiritual and mental development continued. He read all good literature he could obtain, and became an active and interested worker in church and sunday school. Then for a few years he attended a college at Lebanon near his home. During these years there had been growing in him a desire to enter the Lord's service in some form of mission work. So when in 1879 Missionary Haury was about to make his trip to Alaska and was looking for a travelling companion, Baer offered himself for missionary service to the Board and volunteered to accompany Haury at his own expense. The offer was accepted and Baer made the trip as related at another place.

Upon his return from this adventurous journey, Baer resolved to further prepare himself for religious work. He accordingly studied at various institutions in the east, among which were Bloomfield, New Jersey and Union Theological Seminary at New York. From the latter institution he graduated in 1887. The vacations during these years he spent in missionary work. Several summers he worked as colporter for the American Tract Society in New York and Canada. He also worked for a time as city Missionary in the city of New York. and during the summer of 1885, he served as Home Missionary of the General Conference. On May 9, 1886, he was ordained to the ministry by A. B. Shelly. A few days later, on May 12, he was married to Jennie A. Roberts.

Upon his chief work Baer entered when, in the spring of 1887, he accepted the call to become the permanent Home Missionary of the General Conference. In this capacity he is well and favorably known throughout the co-operating Mennonite churches in the United States. With the exception of one year, during which he travelled in Europe, he has been constantly engaged in this work, and has again and again visited all the churches supporting the Conference undertakings, as well as many others. So assiduous has he been that he has several times broken down in health. Until 1894 he had his home in Pennsylvania. In order to be more centrally located for the prosecution of his special work, he in that year removed to Bluffton, Ohio, and has since built a nice home at that place. But he is mostly away from home, busy in the churches North, South, East and West. Throughout the Mennonite denomination the spiritualizing influence of his consecrated work is being felt, and undoubtedly will bear increasing fruitage in years to come.

N. B. GRUBB.

Nathaniel Bertolet Grubb, the subject of this sketch, second son of Silas and Elizabeth (Bertolet) Grubb, was born in Frederick Township, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, July 6, 1850. On his father's side he is a direct descendant of the Grubb family of Mennonites, many of whom suffered martyrdom in the early years of the seventeenth century; some representatives afterwards drifting to England, thence to America, settling in Pennsylvania about the year 1700. On the mother's side the ancestors were French Hugenots and Moravians, who settled in this country about the beginning of the eighteenth century.

Until his seventeenth year N. B. Grubb lived on a farm with his parents, and, when advanced enough in years, worked on the farm during the summer and attended the common schools during the short winter terms. When seventeen, he was apprenticed to a milling establishment at Schwenksville for the purpose of learning the miller's trade. At this work he was engaged for about five years. After dropping his connection with the mill, he set out to gain more of an education. Accordingly he entered Frederick Institute, then an academy and preparatory school for teachers, now the "Mennonite Home for the Aged." During the year 1872 he also studied at the conference school af Wadsworth, Ohio. For several years following he was employed in various ways; part of the time as day laborer.

In the Schwenksville congregation, of which he was a member, be had served as sunday school super-

intendent from 1869 to 1872. The church, being in need of an assistant pastor, and having recognized his fitness for religious work, elected him to this office in 1872, and on June 30 of that year he was ordained by Moses H. Gottschall. Being possessed of an enterprising and progressive mind, he steadily advanced in power and usefelness. In 1877 he established a printing house for book and job printing, and soon after began to edit and publish the "Schwenksville Item." In this work he continued for six years. In 1882 he received a call to become pastor of the First Mennonite church of Philadelphia. He accepted the call, sold out his printing establishment, and since that time has devoted his whole energy to the building up of the church entrusted to his care. In 1884 the congregation at Germantown also came under his care. On May 22 of this year he was ordained to the full ministry.

There was at that time no English paper which he could use in promoting his church work. But he was fully aware that such a paper would be a great help. In accordance with his characteristic enterprise, he promptly began to formulate plans for such a paper, and was about to begin its publication when, upon the suggestion of several other ministers, the sphere of the paper was enlarged and the paper was made the representative of the Eastern Conference; and under the name "The Mennonite" has since been published with increasing usefulness; N. B. Grubb being for several years its editor.

In time the demand for a local congregational paper again became pressing. So on January 1, 1897,

he began to publish the "Mennonite Endeavorer". This little paper now has a monthly circulation of about one thousand copies.

To his courage and effort it is to a very great extent due that the establishment of the "Menonite Home", an institution for the care of the aged, was undertaken and realized. This institution is now free of debt and has in its care a number of old persons who are here well cared for.

In addition to his regular pastoral work his activity reaches out into wider circles. He has for many years been a member of the Evangelical Alliance of Philadelphia, and since this work has expanded into the State Evangelical Alliance, he has served as recording secretary of the State Board. He is one of the two persons who established the National Anti-Treating Society, of which he has served as treasurer since its organization. This society has so greatly expanded in influence that its power has been felt in the Legislature of the state of Pennsylvania.—To him it is due that the General Conference in 1896 adopted the temperance clause in its constitution.

In his own congregation he is an untiring worker. Under his ministry the church has increased in membership from sixty-five to four hundred and thirty. His church work is thoroughly organized. The membership, young and old, share in the work and activities of the church. In the General Conference he at present is a member of the Publication Board, and serves as president of that committee. His experience in printing and publishing has already proven of great benefit to this cause, and undoubtedly will continue to do so in the future.

H. H. EWERT.

Henry H. Ewert was born April 12, 1855, at Ober Nassau near Thorn, West Prussia. His childhood and youth were spent at home with his pious parents, William and Anna (Jantz) Ewert, who did all they could to bring up their children well. The father, though a minister, supported his family by farming, and in this occupation his son Henry was also early trained and employed.

With his sixth year H. H. Ewert's education was begun by his entrance in the village school. This school he attended until his twelfth year. From the twelfth to his fourteenth year he attended a more advanced institution in Thorn, and from which he graduated, ranking fourth. Instruction in this school was very thorough, in accordance with the well known high standard of German schools. He would gladly have continued his studies had he been permitted. Altogether Ewert attended school in Europe for eighty months.

In 1874 the Ewert family emigrated to the United States, stopping for a brief period in Summerfield, Ills., and then settling in Marion County, Kansas. Ewert soon recognized the advantage of a knowledge of the English language. In order to learn this language he attended the public school at Marion, Kansas, for two winters, 1875 and 1876, whereupon he engaged a district

school and taught for two years, while during the intervals he attended the school at Marion. He had now gained a great liking for school work and concluded to equip himself for this profession, by taking a course at the State Normal school at Emporia, Kansas. From this institution he graduated in 1879. After a vacation trip to Colorado during the summer he entered the Des Moines Collegiate Institute at Des Moines, Iowa, in the fall of that year. Here, besides other branches, he studied Latin, Greek and French, while at the same time partly supporting himself by instructing in some of the elementary classes. At the close of the first year a permanent situation was offered him, but he declined and entered the Theological Seminary of the Evangelical Synod at Marthasville, Mo., there to take a two years course for the purpose of fitting himself more specifically for work in the Mennonite denomination. After an attendance of a few months at that place, a change was made in the faculty of which he and a few other students did not approve. He with two other students followed Prof. E. Otto, who had lost his position, to Darmstadt, Ills., and continued his studies under him.

Upon completion of his studies, Ewert returned to Kansas. It was at this time that the Kansas Conference determined to establish a school, undoubtedly prompted to no small degree by the opportunity of employing Ewert as instructor. Ewert was called and 1882 opened school about 10 miles north of Newton. The following year this school was located in a fine, new building at Halstead, Kansas, Ewert continuing its principal. The school flourished, so far as the institutional side is concerned, under his competent and masterly management

and instruction, and much good was done which is still bearing abundant fruit. He continued in this work until 1891, when he received a call to come to Manitoba and take charge of the educational interests of the Menonites in that largest settlement of Mennonites in America. He accepted this call and in the fall of 1891 took up the work there.

In his new field of labor he settled in Gretna, where he established the Central Normal school (now Mennonite Educational Institution), of which he is principal. In this institution he trains young men for teachers in the various districts. He holds also the position of school inspector, which enables him to exert an elevating influence on the hundred schools of the extensive settlement. Already his excellent work there is showing its good effects, and twenty-five years more of the same kind of systematic and thorough work will raise that whole section to a high state of intellectual and spiritual development. In 1884 the Kansas Conference licensed Ewert to preach and the following year he was ordained by Leonhard Sudermann. Though he frequently preached, he never served as a minister of a church in Kansas. In Manitoba he is co-pastor of the Bergthal congregation.

Ewert's activity was never confined to his special work in the institution. Soon after coming to Halstead, the sunday school at that place elected him its superintendent, and it was not long before he had built up a model sunday school. Interested in this kind of work, it was through his agitation that the Annual Convention of the Mennonite sunday schools of Kansas was organized. This organization is still doing excellent work. Through

him also that useful organization, the Mennonite Teacher's Convention of Kansas, was founded, and the course of study for the Mennonite parochial schools of Kansas is his production. The Constitution of the present Western Conference was drafted by him. In Manitoba he has led in the introduction of sunday schools, and sunday school conventions, and other co-operative christian movements.

With his wife (nee Lizzie K. Baer of Summerfield, Ills., with whom he was married in 1882), and his four boys he still lives in Gretna, Manitoba, zealously engaged in his educational and spiritual labors, and honestly endeavoring to build up the Kingdom of God in the denomination of his choice.

A. S. SHELLY.

Anthony S. Shelly was born in Milford Township, Bucks County, Pa., on February 28, 1853. His parents were Levi S. and Barbara Shelly. In Europe the ancestors lived in the Palatinate, Germany, but as early as 1750, A. D., the great-grandfather of A. S. Shelly's grandfather immigrated to America. Though Levi Shelly was a carpenter by trade, he lived on a farm, and here his son Anthony spent the first seventeen years of his life, working for the most part on the farm and securing what education he could in the district school, which he attended for about four and one half months each year after he had reached the school age.

When seventeen years old (1870) he entered the conference school at Wadsworth, Ohio, and spent one year there. Returning to his home, he taught in district schools for two winter terms, while during the summer he worked on the farm. In 1873 he entered the Millersville State Normal School, and completed the regular teacher's course in 1875. After teaching one year each in a district school and the borough schools of Muncy, Lycoming County, Pa., he accepted a call to the English Department of the conference school at Wadsworth. Of this work he had charge for two years (1877—1879) and conducted it with marked success. Again returning to Pennsylvania he was for five years (1879—1884) principal of the borough schools of New-

town, Bucks Co. He then accepted a call to the Mennonite Academy at Halstead, Kansas, where he taught for two years (1884—1886). Once more he returned to Pennsylvania and now engaged in the newspaper publishing business in partnership with U. S. Stauffer. In 1890 he received a call from the Hereford and Upper Milford congregation to became their pastor. Accepting this call, he removed to Bally, Berks County, and entered upon this field of labor. Previous to this time he had a number of times conducted religious services at Halstead, Kans., upon the request of the pastors there, and in the congregations of the Eastern Conference as evangelist. In 1891 he was ordained to the full ministry by A. B. Shelly. His pastoral work has been successful. The congregations in his care have steadily multiplied in numbers as well as increased in activity.

Besides his pastoral work Shelly has done and is doing other important work in the interest of the church. Since 1890 he serves as editor of the "Mennonite." In 1896 he was made secretary of the Board of managers of the Mennonite Old Folks Home in Pennsylvania. Recognizing his fitness for the position, the General Conference elected him its president in 1896, his term of office continuing for three years. The next session of the General Conference (1899) is to be held in his church at Hereford.

C. H. A. VAN DER SMISSEN.

Carl Henry Anthony van der Smissen was born at Friedrichstadt, Silesia, Germany, on December 4, 1851. His father, Carl Justus van der Smissen, was for a number of years prominently connected with the conference school at Wadsworth, O. His mother's name is Sarah. She still survives and has her home with her son.

Young van der Smissen's educational course was begun in his native town. Later he received private instruction from an able instructor by the name of Sass. He then studied at the grammar schools of Husum and Weilberg. When the Franco-Prussian war broke out, he, upon the advise of his parents, went to the school at Basel, Switzerland, where he studied for two years. During the year 1872 he studied at the University at Tuebingen, Germany. He also studied for one half year at Halle. After completing his studies, he travelled in France, northern Italy, Austria and Holland, and visited Mennonite settlements in Switzerland, Palatinate, Nassau, Prussia and Baden.

In June of the year 1874 he came to America, and after a separation of more than six years, rejoined his parents. Not long after this he accepted a call from the Salem congregation near Ashland, Ohio, and in October of the same year was ordained to the full ministry by his father. In 1875 he began to preach also for the small congregation in Cleveland, Ohio. His father hav-

ing now removed into the vicinity of the Salem congregation, he during 1880 left the pastoral work to his father and went to Coshocton, Ohio, where for eight months he served as German teacher.

In 1881 he accepted a call from the Upper Milford congregation in Pennsylvania, to become its pastor. In 1885 he also accepted the pastorate of the Hereford congregation and served both of these churches until the spring of 1890, when he accepted a call from the congregation at Summerfield, Ills. At this place he is still stationed.

In various ways van der Smissen has made himself useful beyond the sphere of his local pastoral work. He has repeatedly served as secretary of the Eastern and Middle District Conferences. Since 1893 he has acted as distributing agent for the Sewing Societies. For some time he was a member of the Mission Board. A specially valuable contribution to the denomination is his history of the Mennonite denomination, published in German in 1895. He is at present secretary of the General Conference, having been elected in 1896 to this responsible position.

H. R. VOTH.

Henry R. Voth was born April 15, 1855, at Alexanderwohl, near Berdjansk in the province of Taurien, South Russia. His parents, Cornelius and Helena Voth, emigrated to the United States in 1874 and settled in Marion County, Kansas, where the father, who was a cabinet maker by trade, engaged in farming.

When in his seventh year, Voth began attending the parochial school and made rapid progress, his favorite studies being Bible History, Geography and Language. When fourteen years old, his common school course ended and for five years following he worked at the cabinet maker's trade for his father. In 1874 he came to America with his parents and assisted them in gaining a foot-hold in the new country. The following winter he clerked in a store in Newton, Kansas. For several summers following he was with his parents on the farm, while he taught during winter. Very early in his life he felt an inner calling to become a missionary. Before leaving Russia he had almost reached the point to offer himself to this service, but the removal to America temporarily put this in the back-ground. But after a time he again felt the same promptings and he now made his purpose known to his minister, H. Richert. Through him his intentions were made known to the General Conference and in due course of time the Mission Board

received him as missionary candidate and sent him to Wadsworth, there to prepare himself for his special calling.

His preparation covered a period of five years (1877—1882), during which time he studied for two and one-half years at Wadsworth, Ohio, two years in the Evangelical Seminary at Marthasville, Mo., completing the course in that institution, and one year in the St. Louis Medical College.

In 1882 he entered the active mission service, being soon placed in charge of the mission station at Darlington, Okl. A few years later he was made superintendent of all the mission stations. In 1884 he married Barbara B. Baer, of Summerfield, Ills., who died in 1889. In 1892 he married Martha Moser of Dalton, Ohio. To the Mission service he was ordained July 22, 1883, and to the full ministry on July 8, 1888.

In 1891, after ten years active service in the Mission, he was granted leave of absence for six months. During this time he made an extended tour through western Europe, Russia, Greece, Turkey, Egypt and Italy. Upon his return the Mission Board placed him in charge of the new mission field in Arizona, then just undertaken. In July of 1893 he entered upon this work and has since faithfully labored to lead the benighted Moki Indians to the light, which is in Jesus Christ.

I. A. SOMMER.

Isaac A. Sommer was born in the Sonnenberg settlement near Dalton, O., on January 17, 1851. His grandparents, who immigrated to America in 1819, had lived on the Sonnenberg, Canton Bern, Switzerland. His parents names were Abraham and Elizabeth. His father was a farmer by occupation.

His early years Sommer spent at home on the farm, getting what education he could in the short sessions of the parochial and public shools. In his eighteenth year he attended the conference school at Wadsworth, Ohio. Then after teaching for several years, he again attended that institution in 1873, '74 and '76. For fifteen years (1869—1884) when not attending school, he taught school. In 1883, when missionary Haury was sick, he upon request of the Board temporarily assisted in the mission work at Cantonment, Oklahoma. In the spring, 1884, he was employed by the Mennonite Publishing Company of Elkhard, Ind., to serve on the editorial staff. In the fall of the same year the General Conference elected him as editor of the "Bundesbote", the official paper of that body. In this capacity he has since successfully labored. Three years later (1887) he was also made editor of the German children's paper, the "Kinderbote". Since serving as editor, Sommer lives with S. F. Sprunger at Berne, Ind. In 1878 he made a tour to Europe. He was ordained to the ministry in 1887 by S. F. Sprunger, and he now not infrequently preaches at Berne and elsewhere.

W. S. GOTTSCHALL.

William S. Gottschall was born near Schwenksville in Montgomery County, Pa., on June 23, 1865. His parents were Moses and Mary (Shelly) Gottschall. His father, though a farmer by occupation, was for forty years a minister and bishop, having a number of churches under his supervision. W. S. Gottschall is a direct descendant of Jacob Gottschall, a Mennonite minister who came to this country in 1702.

After attending common school until about his fifteenth year, Gottschall studied for two terms at Perkiomen Seminary and one term at Ursinus College. From his seveteenth to his twentieth year he taught in common schools. His father now being old and in need of assistance, the church elected him co-pastor at the early age of nineteen years, and in November, 1884, he was ordained to the ministry. Two years later he was ordained to the full ministry. After his father's death in 1888 he succeeded him in office, thus becoming, when but twenty-three years old, bishop of the churches at Schwenksville, Bertolets, Deep Run, Boyertown, and Bowmansville. Some of these charges he has since turned over to others, but at the present writing is in charge of the congregations at Schwenksville, Bertolets, Pottstown, and Bowmansville. Realizing the need and advantage of a more advanced theological education, he studied for several years (1887—1889) at Ursinus College, Collegeville, Pa.

Besides attending to his extensive pastorate, Gottschall has been actively connected with the larger work of the denomination carried on through the conferences. For five years he was secretary of the Eastern Conference. For three years he was a member of the Foreign Mission Board of the General Cenference. In 1896 the General Conference elected him a member of the Home Mission Committee in which he now serves as treasurer.

BENJAMIN EICHER.

Benjamin Eicher was born in the Province of Alsace, Germany, March, 10, 1832. His father, John Eicher, was a native of Alsace, and his mother, Margaret Conrad Eicher, a native of Switzerland. His early education was in French and his schooling ended prior to his fourteenth year. In 1849, then a young man of seventeen, he emigrated to the United States and located in Wayne County, Ohio. He had borrowed forty dollars to pay for his passage ; but once in America, he soon returned the money. He attended English school in Ohio thirty-three days. In 1853 he removed to Washington County, Iowa, near Noble, where he resided the rest of his life. In December, 1855, he married Lydia Sommer.

On arriving in Iowa, Eicher bought seventy acres of land and engaged in farming, threshing and similar pursuits. He also taught in public schools for about fifteen years. In the fall of 1862 he was ordained a preacher in an Amish congregation. This congregation became independent of the Amish Conference in 1874. For eighteen years following his congregration stood aloof from all formal connection with sister churches, but upon the advise of Eicher, who realized the advantage of co-operation, the congregation united with the General Conference in 1893. In appropriate recognition of his abilities, Eicher was at once elected a member of the Foreign Mission Board. He was, however, not permitted to labor much or long in this new field. For scarcely a month later he was stricken with heart failure and December 7, 1893, he passed away. Eicher was a man of great powers of mind as well as of a large heart, and his removal, when on the very threshhold of special usefulness to his denomination and in the larger spheres of the Lord's Kingdom, was everywhere felt as a great loss.

M. S. MOYER.

Mannasses S. Moyer was born September 25, 1845, in Bucks County, Pa., and grew to young manhood on a farm. At seven he began attending a subscription school. Later he attended various schools for brief periods and for one year was also a student at Wadsworth. For a number of years he followed teaching as a profession. From the fall of 1871 till spring 1875 he taught in the conference shool at Wadsworth, O. He was ordained to the ministry in 1873, to serve the Wadsworth congregation. Since 1869 Moyer has attended all sessions of the General Conference. He has been an active and useful worker, and has travelled much as home missionary. For nine years he was a member of the Home Mission Committee. In 1896 he was elected a member of the Foreign Mission Board. Moyer's present home is near Tipton, Mo., where he is pastor of the Bethel congregation.

ALLEN M. FRETZ.

Allen M. Fretz was born December 12, 1853, in Bucks County, Pa. His father, Ely Fretz, was a miller by trade. His mother's maiden name was Mary Moyer (or Myer). The ancestors of both parents had immigrated to this country from the Palatinate early in the eigteenth century. From his fifth to his twelfth year Fretz attended the ordinary English district school; German he was taught at home. After that he worked on the farm until October 1869, when he entered the conference school at Wadsworth, O. This institution he attended for about six months. Later he also attended for short terms at Normal schools in Pennsylvania. For eleven terms he taught districts schools in Bucks County, Pa. Being called to the ministry by the Deep Run Church, he was ordained in 1883 by Moses Gottschall. In 1885 he was one of the projectors of the "Mennonite" and was chosen one of its associate editors. The Sunday School and Young People's Departments are now in his charge. For three years, 1887—1890, he was a member of the Mission Board. In 1893 the church at Souderton, Pa., requested him to become their pastor also. He accepted the call and, in order to be able to care better for his increased pastoral duties, removed from his farm to the town of Souderton. He is active in his work, quick to introduce improved methods of work, and both churches in his care are in a flourishing condition.

JACOB S. MOYER.

Jacob S. Moyer was born in Bucks Co., Pa., December 29, 1842. His early education was very meager. He was reared on a farm, but later learned the cobler's trade. At the opening of the conference school in 1868 he was among the first to seek admission. He attended for three and one-half years, and was one of the first graduates. In 1871 he accepted a call to the Deep Run congregation at Springfield, Pa., and was ordained to the ministry by J. H. Oberholzer. For one term he served on the Home Mission Committee and from 1884 to 1893 he was a member of the Foreign Mission Board.

H. J. KREHBIEL.

Henry J. Krehbiel was born September 8, 1865, at Franklin, Lee County, Iowa. His parents were Jacob E. and Katherine (Ruth) Krehbiel. His father was for many years pastor of the congregation at Summerfield, Ill,, at which Henry J. grew to manhood. His first instruction Krehbiel received in German from D. F. Risser. Later he attended public school for a number of years. For some time he received private instruction in the classic languages from an evangelical minister. For two years he attended a college at Lebanon, Ill. Then he taught for two years. After this he entered the Evangelical Theological Seminary at St. Louis, from which institution he graduated in 1892. In the same year he received a call from the congregation at Trenton, Ohio, to become their pastor. This call he accepted and has since been carrying on a greatly blest work at that place. In 1893 he was elected a member of the Publication Board of the General Conference, and to this position he was re-elected in 1896.

N. C. HIRSCHY.

Noah Calvin Hirschy was born February 25, 1867, on a farm, one mile south of Berne, Ind. His parents were Philip and Mary Hirschy. Early in life he showed great interest in books and learning. When six years old, he began attending the neighboring district school. After he had grown up to young boyhood, his father proposed to keep him from school and put him to work on the farm. But the lad pleaded so persistently to be permitted to continue at school, that the father yielded. He thereafter continued in the country district school until his seventeenth year, after which, during the summer of 1885, he attended a Normal school. After this time he alternately taught and attended school for a number of years. During the summer of 1886 and 1887 he attended the Normal school at Portland, Ind., then for several years he attended the Tri-State Normal College at Angola, Indiana, graduating from this institution in 1891. During the year following he served as principal of the public schools at Berne, Indiana.

During the year 1892 he received a call to become minister of the congregation at Wadsworth, Ohio, which call he accepted. While laboring zealously and with success for the upbuilding of the church, he here also continued studying, by attending the Normal School at Wadsworth. Continuing in the work of the ministry, he entered Oberlin College and Seminary in 1893 and continued his work until he completed the collegiate course in 1897 and the theological course in 1898.

On May 6, 1894, he was ordained to the full ministry by Ephraim Hunsberger. Under his care the church at Wadsworth has recovered from its decadent condition and now it once more flourishes. In 1896 Hirschy was chosen a member of the Home Mission Committee of the General Conference.

J. C. KREHBIEL.

John C. Krehbiel was born at Lohnmuehl, Upper Bavaria, Germany, June 9, 1811. When twenty years old, he came to the United States, but one year later returned. On April 12, 1837, he was married to Anna Wohlgemuth and soon after again went to America, accompanied by his wife, and settled in Butler County, Ohio. After one year's residence at this place, he removed to West Point, Lee County, Iowa, where he labored at his trade, that of cooper. The church at that place elected him minister in 1849. He was a good man and did much to promote the cause of unification. He was chairman of the preliminary meeting held 1859 for the organization of the General Conference. He died February 27, 1886.

P. P. LEHMANN.

Peter P. Lehmann was born in Wayne County, Ohio, on March 12, 1846. He received a meager education in his early years, and afterwards learnt the cobbler's trade. In 1871 the Bethel congregation at Tipton, Mo., to which place he had removed, gave him a call to become their pastor. As he felt insufficiently equipped for this work, he attended the school at Wadsworth, Ohio, for one year (1872—1873), and then began his pastoral activity, in which he still continues.

J. J. KLIEWER.

John J. Kliewer was born July 9, 1859, in South Russia, in the Molotschna colony. He attended the village school and assisted on the farm until his fifteenth year, when his parents emigrated to the United States and settled in McPherson County, Kansas. In this country he taught and attended school for a few years. In 1884 he accepted a call as teacher to the Mission School at Cantonment, Oklahoma. In August 1888 he was ordained a missionary. The following year he built the mission station on the Washita river and engaged in mission work among the adult Arapahoe Indians.

MICHAEL M. HORSCH.

Michael M. Horsch was born January 4, 1872, at Waldmannshofen in Wurtemberg, Germany. After passing through the common school course, he spent a few years with his father on the farm. When sixteen years old, he emigrated to the United States and located at Halstead, Kansas. He soon offered himself as candidate for missionary, and being received by the Board, was placed in the conference school at Halstead. In 1892 he completed the three years course, whereupon he entered the mission service. After serving in various capacities, the mission station at Arapahoe, Oklahoma, was assigned to him, and at this post he is still active.

APPENDIX II.

1. Constitution of the General Conference.

2. Dialogue between two Pennsylvanians.

CONSTITUTION OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF MENNONITES OF NORTH AMERICA.

Adopted at a regular meeting of conference held in the Alexanderwohl church near Newton, Kansas, October 19—27, 1896.

I. INTRODUCTION.

"The General Conference of Mennonites of North America" is the name of a united body of Mennonite congregrations, whose origin dates back to May 28, 1860, when the first meeting of the Conference was held at West Point, Iowa, by the representatives of three congregations. In the course of time other congregations from various states of the Union joined this conference in ever increasing numbers, a very important accession coming from the congregations that emigrated from Russia and other parts of Europe. Thus from a small beginning there has grown, under the gracious guidance of God, a considerable and constantly increasing Church body.

The General Conference owes its origin and its growth to a deeply felt need of a closer union of the individual congregations, with the object of promoting the "unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," of a firmer establishing in the common faith, and of rendering mutual assistance in good works. In its meetings the conference offers opportunity to consult and come to a mut-

ual understanding in questions concerning our mission work and the welfare of our church. The conference recognizes its work to be to assist in the building up of God's Kingdom,—at home in such branches of work as itinerant preaching, evangelization, founding of new churches where needed, publication, deaconess-work, care of orphans, establishing of schools, care for the poor, etc.; and abroad by the sending out of missionaries and establishing mission stations, schools, and churches among the heathen in this and other lands.

II. CHURCH REGULATIONS.

1. Our Common Confession.

This conference recognizes and acknowledges the Sacred Scripture of the Old and New Testament as the only and infallible rule of faith and life; for other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ (1. Cor. 3: 11). In matters of faith it is therefore required of the congregations which unite with the conference that, accepting the above confession, they hold fast to the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, baptism on confession of faith, the refusal of all oaths, the Christ taught doctrine of peace and non-resistance, and the practice of a scriptural church discipline.

2. Admission.

All congregations of the Mennonite denomination which adhere to the above confession are invited to unite with the General Conference, and will be received into the conference on application in the manner as hereinafter set forth.

3. Secret Societies.

It is the conviction of the General Conference that all secret societies without exception are in their tendency in direct opposition to the letter and spirit of the Word of God. The apostolic admonition is: "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers; for what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity? or what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord had Christ with Belial? or what portion hath a believer with an unbeliever?" 2. Cor. 6: 14—15. Christians, as members of the body of Christ, can impossibly maintain such fellowship with those who deny Christ and God, as the lodge requires of them in that they shall regard and treat one another as brothers, however widely their heart attitude towards God and man would otherwise separate them. Therefore no congregation which tolerates among its members those belonging to secret societies shall be admitted into conference. Moreover conference asks of all congregations belonging to it that they shall energetically testify against the lodge evil, and that such congregations, if there are any, in which lodge members may already be found, shall strive by all evangelical means to purge themselves of this element.

4. Temperance.

Conference also recognizes the Bible teaching that a drunkard can not inherit the Kingdom of God, Gal. 5: 21. A congregation that tolerates among its members the drink evil, can not be regarded as christian, and can therefore not be a congregation in this conference. Recognizing in the so-called saloons and all kinds of drink houses one of the greatest and most com-

mon evils in human society, these should in no wise be countenanced by our congregations and members of our conference.

5. The Confession Unalterable.

There shall at no time any rules or decisions be made or adopted which shall in any way contradict the principles of faith as set forth in this constitution.

6. Rights of Congregations Inviolable.

The General Conference is not a legislative, but an advisory body. Therefore no rule or decision may be passed prejudicial to the rights and independence of the individual congregations.

7. Ordination of Evangelists and Missionaries.

When conference through its respective committees has occasion to call evangelists or missionaries, who are to be formally ordained to their respective offices, the ceremony can be performed in accordance with the form given in *Handbook for Ministers*, published by conference.

III. CHARTER.

(The charter is omitted here but will be found printed in the pamphlet form of the constitution.)

IV. BUSINESS REGULATIONS.—(By-Laws.)

A. External.

1. The Election of Trustees.

The nine trustees shall be elected for a term of nine years, and the terms of the respective members shall be so arranged that at every triennial meeting of conference one-third of the number only shall be elected.

2. Organization of Board of Trustees.

After every election the Board of Trustees shall organize themselves by choosing from their number a President, Secretary and Treasurer. They may also elect or appoint of their number such committees as they may deem advisable for the performance of their duties.

3. Rights and Duties of Trustees.

a. The Trustees have the right to receive bequests and donations, real and personal property, to dispose of and administer the same according to their best judgment. They shall pay out all moneys in their hands according to the direction of donors and the resolutions of conference. They shall be accountable to conference for all their transactions and shall at each meeting of conference give a full report of all business done.

b. All regulations adopted by the Board of Trustees shall be in accord with the constitution and decisions of conference, and shall be binding until the next meeting of conference when they will be subject to approval or change by conference.

c. On questions as to the disposition to be made of money realized from bequests or donations received by the trustees and transferred to any of the standing boards or committees of conference for use in their special line of work, the trustees shall have the right to advise and vote with the board or committee in question. In cases where the trustees for special reasons delay to pay over such money to a board or committee claiming the same, such board or committee shall have the right to appeal

to the officers of conference, and where these can not or will not decide the matter then to the conference itself.

d. It shall be the duty of the Board of Trustees to represent conference in a legal capacity, and of carrying into effect all decisions involving legal business transactions in accordance with instructions of conference.

B. Internal.

1. Membership Rights.

a. Any Mennonite congregation, of whatever branch of the Mennonite church, agreeing to and adopting the constitution, can become a member of this conference, provided that on the question of its admission, conference decides affirmatively by a majority vote. Such congregation is then entitled to all the rights and privileges of membership and assumes all the duties of the same as defined by these by-laws.

b. The privilege of participating in the deliberations of conference, be it by individual persons, societies or corporations, shall also be decided upon by a majority vote of conference.

c. Each congregation belonging to conference shall be entitled to one vote for every thirty of its communicant members and an additional vote for a remaining fractional part of this number.

d. Congregations that for any reason can not send delegates of their own to conference, may and should authorize brethren or delegates from other conference congregations to represent them with their votes.

e. Congregations that neglect to have themselves represented at three consecutive triennial conference meetings, without giving valid reasons for such neglect,

and leaving the official inquiry for such reasons unanswered, shall be regarded as having withdrawn from membership of conference, and the fact shall be properly entered on the minutes. Such congregations can however upon application be again received into conference in the regular manner.

f. The right of participation in the deliberations and discussions, given to visitors of conference, does not include the right to vote. The right to vote given by conference to persons in attendance shall be limited to the sessions of the conference meeting at which it is granted, and extends only to questions relating to church work, and that are fully disposed of by a vote on them. Such right does not extend to the business concerns of conference which involve the rights and duties of members, therefore not to the election of standing boards and committees, nor to measures which are carried into effect outside of conference meeting.

2. Organization and Election.

a. Upon the convening of conference in regular or special meeting, the delegates composing the conference shall present their credentials from the congregations they are to represent. These being received and duly recorded, and an order for the sessions having been adopted, the work of the conference shall proceed.

b. The officers of conference, President, Vice-President, and Secretary, shall be elected either at the beginning or the close of each conference meeting and shall serve till their successors are elected and enter upon their duties. No person shall be eligible for the same office for more than two terms in succession.

c. The President shall preside at all the sessions of conference, shall appoint all temporary committees, and in cases of a tie vote on elections and resolutions shall give the deciding vote.

d. The Vice-President shall in the absence of the President preside over the meetings and exercise all the rights and duties of the President.

e. The Secretary shall have for safe keeping all minutes and papers belonging to conference and shall carry on the necessary official correspondence.

f. A recording secretary shall be appointed by the President at each meeting of conference, who shall assist the secretary in making a true record of the proceedings and prepare them for publication.

g. Neither the President nor Secretary shall at the same time be member of a standing board or committee, but shall in the interval between conference meetings stand independent of all boards and committees, so that these may in difficult cases apply to the officers for advise, and take them into consultation.

h. The Treasurer of the Board of Trustees shall also have charge of the treasury of conference for general expenses.

3. Appeal.

Personal or congregational difficulties which by their nature should come before a congregation or district conference and generally find their solution there, can come before the General Conference for consideration in the following manner: If the matter can not be settled in the congregation, and the advice of the District Conference does not bring about a satisfactory solution, then,

the District Conference having been duly notified, the matter can be appealed to the General Conference and may be taken up by the business committee.

4. Meetings.

a. The regular meetings of the General Conference shall be held triennially. Special meetings may be called by the officers whenever the representatives of at least ten conference congregations or one of the standing boards or committees request it.

b. At the close of each meeting, conference shall decide upon the place for its next meeting. The fixing of the date for the meeting shall be left to the conference officers.

c. During the deliberations of conference the commendable parliamentary rule shall be observed that every person desiring to speak shall rise and first address the presiding officer for recognition. While speaking he shall not be interrupted, that there may be but one speaking at a time. But the chairman shall at all times have the right to call a speaker to order if he occupies more time than is allotted to the subject or is otherwise out of order.

5. Standing Boards, Committees, Etc.

a. Conference shall chose from its own number, *i. e.*, from the delegates and members of conference congregations, a Board of Home Missions, a Board of Foreign Missions, and a Board of Publication, each to consist of six members, and a Business Committee of three members. They shall be chosen for a term of three conference periods or nine years, one-third of the number

of each board or committee to be elected at each triennial conference meeting.

b. Each board shall organize itself by chosing a President, Secretary and Treasurer.

c. The Board of Home Missions shall arrange and conduct in accord with the directions of conference all work and undertakings of conference in the line of Home Missions for which no special committees have been constituted. They shall appoint the necessary workers, such as itinerant preachers, evangelists, etc., and shall have charge of the funds contributed for home mission work.

d. The Board of Foreign Missions shall appoint and send out missionaries and workers of the foreign mission field, conduct the work according to the instructions, decisions and regulations of conference, and have charge of the funds of the foreign mission treasury.

e. The Board of Publication shall have in charge the publication of church periodicals, sunday school and other publications, the conference book store and other departments connected therewith. The board shall employ the necessary workers, such as editors, business managers, etc.

f. The business committee shall prior to every meeting of conference prepare a program for the same, which shall be published in the church papers three months before the convening of conference. During the meetings the committee shall arrange the subjects for consideration and place them in order before conference. All questions and subjects which it is desired to have brought before conference, are therefore to be presented to the business committee. The committee shall also in

co-operation with the ministers of the local congregation, arrange for the services to be held in connection with the conference.

g. Conference shall elect a statistical secretary, whose work it shall be to gather statistical reports on the number of ministers, church members, sunday school pupils, amount of contributions for various purposes, etc., etc., and submit the same to conference.

h. If in the course of time other boards or committees shall become necessary, conference can at any time create the same in the manner as above indicated.

i. All standing boards and committees shall submit written reports at each regular meeting of conference. Furthermore all decisions and instructions to workers, as also the reports of the latter, shall be officially preserved and laid before conference whenever demanded.

k. The election of officers of conference, trustees and standing committees and boards shall be by ballot. Temporary committees shall be appointed by the President.

l. The vote for officers shall be free without nomination; for the boards and committees after a free nomination.

m. Vacancies in the standing committees occurring between conference meetings shall be temporarily filled by appointment through conference officers. At the following meeting conference shall besides the regular election fill also these vancancies for the balance of the unexpired terms.

n. No person shall be elected into more than one of the standing boards or committees. But the trustees being a purely business board, shall be eligible to any of

the standing boards. Likewise members of standing committees may be appointed on temporary committees, which serve only during the meeting of conference.

o. The boards and committees shall always be elected in the same order in which their reports are called for at that meeting of conference.

6. Duties and Rights of Conference Members.

a. Each congregation belonging to the conference has besides the rights above defined, also the right of ownership in all the conference property. But all these rights cease when a congregation withdraws or is expelled from conference.

b. Conference expects of all participating congregations that as far as possible they be represented at every meeting, and that they seek to further the interest of conference during and between the meetings.

7. Treasuries.

Conference has the following treasuries, and reserves to itself the right to increase or diminish the number according to its needs:

a. A general treasury to defray the expenses connected with conference meetings and such other expenses as can not properly be paid out of any of the other treasuries. This treasury is in charge of the treasurer of the Board of Trustees.

b. A treasury for Home Missions which is in charge of the treasurer of the Home Mission Board.

c. A treasury for Foreign Missions in charge of the treasurer of the Board of Foreign Missions.

d. A board may choose its treasurer from outside its own number, in which case the person so chosen shall be, by virtue of his office as treasurer, a full voting member of the board.

8. General Provisions.

a. All resolutions and decisions of conference passed prior to the adoption of this constitution and which conflict in any way with any part of the constitution are hereby repealed.

b. Conference can make amendments to this constitution by a two-thirds vote in favor of any amendment. The proposition for an amendment must be put into the hands of the program committee at least three months prior to the meeting of conference at which it is to be voted on, and shall be published with the program of the conference.

c. No amendment to the constitution shall be voted on at the same session at which it is for the first time brought up for discussion.

DIALOGUE BETWEEN TWO PENNSYLVANIANS.

Published in the Christliche Volksblatt, September 3rd, 1862. Author probably John H. Oberholzer.

A. Well, B., wie geht es als bei Dir?

B. O, so midling.

A. Ich hab schun lang mol zu Dir kumma wolla, um mol mit Dir zu schwätza wega allerhand Sacha, wies alleweil in der Welt zugeht.

B. Ei ja, da kummst Du mer just recht; ich bin a so voll, dass ich schier net wes wu mer der Kop steht.

A. Drum bin ich so früh den Morja zu Dir kumma, und hab gedenkt mer deta heit da ganza Dak d'zu nemma, weil ich a schir ke Auskummas me wes; un wammer alsomal n'anner so sei Elend klagt—dno werts em doch oft a bissel leichter.

B. O ja, sell hab ich a schun oft auskfunna.

A. Sin dei Leit doch all ksund?

B. Ja, mer hätte wege Sellem nix zu klaga. Del vun da Buwa sin am pluga, und die annara sinn im Schwamm am meha, un mei Alti is just am Krumbeera schela fars Mittag, un die Mäd sin noch a bissel am Eppelschnitza, bis d's Kras drucka wert; dno wolla sie ans Recha. Ich hab just a mer do en alter Recha z'recht macha wolla, far so bisle an der Fens rum zu recha, um's Kras a helfa bissel ausnanner zu starra; un die zwe Klena sin hinri in's Darnafeld a wenig Blackbera z'hola far etlicha Bleckbeerabei. Ich gleich selli sort Bai schier bisli besser wie eniga annara Bai, das mer backa kann. O, ich hät jo shier vergessa zu froga, wie Dei Leit als a kumma.

A. Well mer sin a ziemlich ksund, un sin a als a wenig an der Erwet. Mei Grosser is heit mit der Fuhr uf

den Racksberk kfara far a wenig Plattasteh zu hola far mei Hof z'belega, s' wert als frühjohrs un spotjahrs so dreckig um mei Haus rum. Mei Alti krumelt schier allamol als, wann sie so im Dreck rum dappa muss ; ich hab awer k'denkt ich wol dem K'krummel 'n End macha, un wol Plattasteh im Hof rum lega.

B. O sell is gut. Ich hab in meim Hof schun lang so Steh rum klegt, vorher, wenn als manchmal ens hin kschlaga is, dann is mer allamol im Dreck gelega ; nau sterzt mer doch just uf die Steh.—Paar fun da annara Buwa sin am Mist sprea. Mer muss ewa, denk ich doch nochamal Säa. Awer – der Hund möcht's bal hola— verleicht kumma die Südlicha noch un verderwa em noch Alles ; mei Dicker is nunner ans Stoffels, gucka, was se alleweil im Stohr far Butter un Krumbeera gewa. Viel Gelt kammer ewa allaweil net macha, 's'holt alles net viel un was mer krikt, is schier lauter Lumpa Geld und no net viel dafun. Unser Kleni hot ebbes vun der Summer Kumplen kat, awer sis a wider besser. Mei Fra hot kment sie wot a mit kumma, euch mol zu b'sucha, awer sie hot 'm Fränk sei hossa flicka müssa. Sie kummt awer a bald mol, denk ich.

A. O dann geht es bei euch doch a noch so ziemlich beim Alta.

B. O ja ; awer doch mehn ich als a bissel meh hinnerschisch als wie ferschisch. Verdiena kammer net viel, un s'gheht bal alla paar Dak ener rum un schreibt Land un Leit, Küh un Gäul un Alles uf ; un wenn sie kaum überm Schwamm drowa sin, so kummt schun wider ener über den Berk runner, un frokt dich, ob du ihm net den Dax bezahla kennst ?

A. Ja, sell is wohr ; un allgebot kummt als noch

ener far ganz neua sache. Es geht ewa alleweil n Mann fun weit hinna draus in unsra Kmena rum un schreibt Geld uf far a Schul.

B. Was! far a Schul!! Hemmar dann noch net Schula knunk? Was far a Schul soll dann des nau gewa? Vermuthlich sin widder so a paar Faullenzer ergets uf-ferstanna, die ebbes a'bartiges ufstella wolla, un uns dumma Baura s'Geld ablausa wolla. Do wer ich awer, denk ich a mol, mei Geldsack zuschrauwa.

A. Ewa grad des is ens fun da Sacha, wu ick kment hab, das mer amol minanner driwer schwetza wollta.

B. Well mer kenna mal driwer schwetza, awer ich denk s'bat net viel.

A. Host du dann noch nix dafun gehört?

B. Ne. Ich wes noch gar nix dafun.

A. Dann will ich dir mol verzähla, was ich selbst den Mann hab höra saga.

B. So, dann hast du den Mann selwer ksena.

A. Ja; un ich hab ihn a höra brediga.

B. Ah - do is es a Brediger; so, so, ich bin doch nau bissle kwunerich, awer Klawa hab ich mol freilich noch gar net an des ganz Ding.

A. Awer wann ich Der verzähle soll, was der Mann vunera Schul (oder Lehranstalt, wie ers kesa hot), so muss ich viel weiter fana afanga.

B. Ich bin net wies Leit gibt, die gar nix höra wolla, wann sie mahna es wehr ebes, wu sie net gleiche deta; sell sin Leit, die dumm sin, un s'ärgst is, sie wolla a net kscheit wera; so bin ich awer net. Ich mehn mer sol immer schnell zu höra un langsam zu reden sein.

A. Sell is ganz recht, so mahn ich a.

B. Nau verzähl mer mol wega dem fromma Mann

seiner Schul. Wan mer ebbes so zwischa nei beifallt, dan will ich Dich stoppa.

A. Du wehst, unser Kmeschaft (ich mehn die Manista) hen sich, seit sie in Amerika wohna, schun oft vunnanner gerissa, awer noch nix dabei verdient, awer schun unvergleichlich viel dadurch an Glieder verlora.

B. Sell is grad so, un 's hot mich schun oft g'wunnert, wie sell kummt.

A. Well ich denk ich kann ders saga. Ich hab vun etlicha Brediger in unsrer Kmeschaft höra saga, die schun lang in der Stille dra kschaft hen, um auszufinna, wu der Fehler steckt. Di sin dra ganga un hen for zwe Johr zurück in Iowa a allgemene Zammakunft von Brediger un Glieder garufa un dart hen sie dno driwer gekonsidert, was mer thu sot, um die Kmeschaft besser zu verehnige, weil sie in Amerika so viel Mehninga hen un so vun enanner abkschlossa do steha.

B. Bist du kwis dafun, dass so'n Zammakunft in Iowa kalta wara is?

A. O ja, do zweifel ich gar net dra, dann es hot mir en Mann es ksat, der mich noch nie net beloga hot; der dabei war.

B. So, so. Well, was weiter?

A. Sie hen dno dart an sellara Zammakunft kmacht, dass im a Johr noch seller Zeit wider a Zammakunft in Ohio kalta werra sot.

B. Hen sie dno dart noch a mol a Zammakunft kalta?

A. Ja, bischur hen sie.

B. Un was hen sie dart kmacht?

A. Ei sie hen noch a mol alles, was sie an der ersta Zammakunft kmacht kat hen, iwerguckt un verbessert.

B. Wie hot dan sell galaut, wu sie gamacht hen an sellara Zammakunft?

A. Des kann ich Dir nau net grad alles saga. Awer schreib en Brief an die Volksblattdruckerei, dart hen sie alles gedruckt, dno kannst du sell alles lesa; un im Krund war die Zammakunft in Ohio estimmig enig, dass die Manista-Brediger wera durchaweck zu schlecht gelernt, und dart käm es her, dass ener so wot, un der anner annister; sell war enihau, denk ich, ihre Mening.

* * *

B. Die anner Woch, wu mer beinanner wara, um minnanner zu schwetza, hemmer, glab ich, ufkoert, wu die Ohio Zammakunft kment hät: Die Brediger wära dorchaweck zu schlecht klernt etc.

A. Ja, ich wes noch, dart hemmer ufkört. Un sell is, denk ich, a ziemlich wohr; vun wega weil mers mol net legla kann, dass als so öfters mol ener so un der anner anister ment, un doch ment viel Zeit enjeder, er wär kscheiter as wie die mensta annara.

B. Sell is woll so, awer ich halt net viel uf die grosse Lerning, weil mer schun vun Leit kört hot, die wega grosser Lerning närrisch warra wära.

A. O sell is awer nix. Die Lerning macht Niemand närrisch, awer ich glab, dass sie die Leit kscheiter macht, un ich glab, ich un Du bräuchte net weit vun hem geh, um des auszufinna; enihau ich mehn, wann ich un Du wenig meh Lerning hätta, a e bissel kscheiter wära.

B. Was! mehnst Du ich wär net kscheit?

A. Hosch, hosch ! Sell hab ich net ksat, awer a bissel kscheiter kennta mer alla zwe sei.

B. Dart geb ich wol uf dazu ; awer denkst Du dann die Lerning macht em kscheiter ?

A. Ei was dann ? Ich hab doch kadenkt, so viel wüstu, dass des, wu mer not klernt hot, mer a net was.

B. Ja freilich, wammers sella wek nemmt, awer ich mehn doch, 's wehr net nothwennig. Guck mol uf meiner Bauerei rum un sehn mol, wie ich alles ufgfickst hab, dass gester der Jockel kmehnt hot, 's wehr die schönst ums Städtel rum. Un guck mol mei Gäul un Küh un Säu ! Un wanns ans Geld macha geht, dann bin ich a bei der Heck.

A. O well, des is all gut knunk, awer hätstu des all so ufficksa un männetscha kenna, wann du es net serst klernt hätscht ?

B. O, for des braucht's net viel Lerning. Ich hab just ksehna, wie mei Dade s'kmacht hot, un so mach ichs a ; un ich wes, so is es recht.

A. Un so mehnst Du dann, far all dass zu thu breigt mer net viel Lerning.

B. O ne. Ich wüsst net warum.

A. Siehst Du dann net ei, dass Du vun Kind a host afanga müssa, all sell, was uf der Bauerei vorgeht, zu lerna ? Hot net dei Dade Dir als ksat : So must's macha un so musts macha, un nau musts thu, so ists recht oder so ists letz ?

B. Ja freilich ; awer sell war sei Pflicht, denk ich.

A. Gell, wie Du a Kind warst, host Du nix vun der Bauerei zu tenda verstanna ?

B. O ne, so wenig wie 'n Echhaas.

A. Nau siehst Du, dass Dei Dade Dichs erst hot lerna müssa.

B. O—well—nau—dass mer doch so misserabel dumm sei kann! Nau sehn ich erst, dass mei Dade mich vun Klenem uf hot studira un lerna macha. Ja, ja, nau —kwis, wann ich nix klernt hät, wär ich so dumm wie 'n Stückel. Hm, ja - un muss als noch alla Dak lerna.

A. Nau hostu eisehna lerna, dass mer net amol recht baura kann, mitaus mer hot die Bauerei studirt.

B. Ja, des sehe ich nau wol.

A. Well, dann wolla mer nau wieder zurück kumma un vun der Schul schwätza, serst awer vun unsra Brediger.

B. Ja, was is awer viel von unsra Brediger zu schwätze? Ich mehn als, vun dena sol mer net viel saga.

A. Freilich derf mer a vun de Brediger schwätza, awer mer sol immer acht gewa, was mer schwätzt.

B. Ja, awer wammer vun ihna schwätza will, dann werd's doch net viel ausmacha, was mer vun ihna schwätzt, wann se net dabei sin.

A. Ja, ja, do verloss Dich druf, des macht viel aus, was mer vun ihna hinna rum schwätzt.

B. Du mehnst ewa, denk ich, dass wann sie's als ausfinna, dann deta sie em als in ihra Brediga rum belza, un sell det mer dno doch hassa; awer do braucht mer jo net viel drum gewa; mer kanns jo zu em Ohr nei un zum annara raus geh lossa.

A. Wann des Dei Mehning is, dann kummst Du mer just vor as wie 'n Bauer, der vunara Bauerei schwetza will, wu er nix davun versteht. Ich bin wol a dumm wega meina Pflichta gega die Brekiger, awer so viel wes ich doch, das mer net hinna ihna rum schwätza derf, was mer will.

B. Ja, warum net? Die Leit thuns ja doch, un a del ment mer, wie unkscheiter wie liewer.

A. Ich wes es wol, dass es so is, wie Du sägst; un mer wot es a noch so gelta lossa, wann es Heida wera un a Heida sei wotta, die es so macha; awer vun Leit, die Christa sei wolla un mene mer breicht nix drum zu gewa, was mer hinner seim Brediger rum schwätzt, un dun es a, die sin so blind wie en Maulwarf un so schlecht wie en verreckter Keffer.

B. Ja, awer wie soll mers denn macha, wammer 'n „Nip" uf sie hot, un mak nix zu ihna selwer saga?

A. Ei, 's Maul halta dät ich denka wär am kscheitscha; awer gelt, der wu die gross Herd Säu ins Wasser hot springa macha, der steht als hinna dra un pischpert dena Leit, wo so blind un schlecht sin, als so hemlich ins Ohr: „Geb 'm 'n Buff, geb 'm 'n Buff, weil er mer als uf der Kanzel so 'n schlechter Nama macht, un ich los ja doch de Leit de freia Willa, zu thu, was sie wolla."

A. Wohl genunk, wenn er net en Lügner wär; un mei liewer B., geb acht, dass er dich net am Hals krikt un reisst dich nunner ins schwartz Loch.

B. Du machst mer halwer bang. Fun dena Sacha wes ich so wenig. Unser Brediger legt uns so wenig die Sacha aus.

A. Drum sollta sie besser klernt werra. (Fortf. folgt.)

Volksblatt, October 1st, 1862.

"The dialogue between two Pennsylvanians, which appeared in the last two numbers has not met with approval with some of our respected readers. On this account the rest of the dialogue will not be published--at least not in the style and dialect in which it has so far appeared. The writer of the dialogue had much of value to offer which he intended to present in this conversation between the two Pennsylvanians; but we do not wish to enter anything in the columns of our paper which would prove unedifying to our esteemed readers."

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ERRATA.

PAGE xi.	3rd	line	from	above, omit the words "and which."
" 11.	13th	"	"	below, read "causes" for courses.
" 25.	10th	"	"	above, read "cause" for course.
" 62.	13th	"	"	" read "procedure" for proceedure.
" 66.	13th	"	"	below, read "had" for have.
" 78.	4th	"	"	" read "sudden" for suddden.
" 89.	3rd	"	"	" read "our" for onr.
" 169.	2nd	"	"	above, read "procedure" for proceedure.
" 181.	5th	"	"	" read "He" for Ha.
" 181.	15th	"	"	" read "Conference" for Conferemce.
" 261.	15th	"	"	below, read "were" for was.
" 279.	17th	"	"	" read "things" for thing.
" 303.	13th	"	"	above, read "easily" for casely.
" 328.	8th	"	"	" read " " "
" 351.	4th	"	"	below, read "1896" for 1859.
" 386.	13th	"	"	above, read "agitated" for gitated.

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